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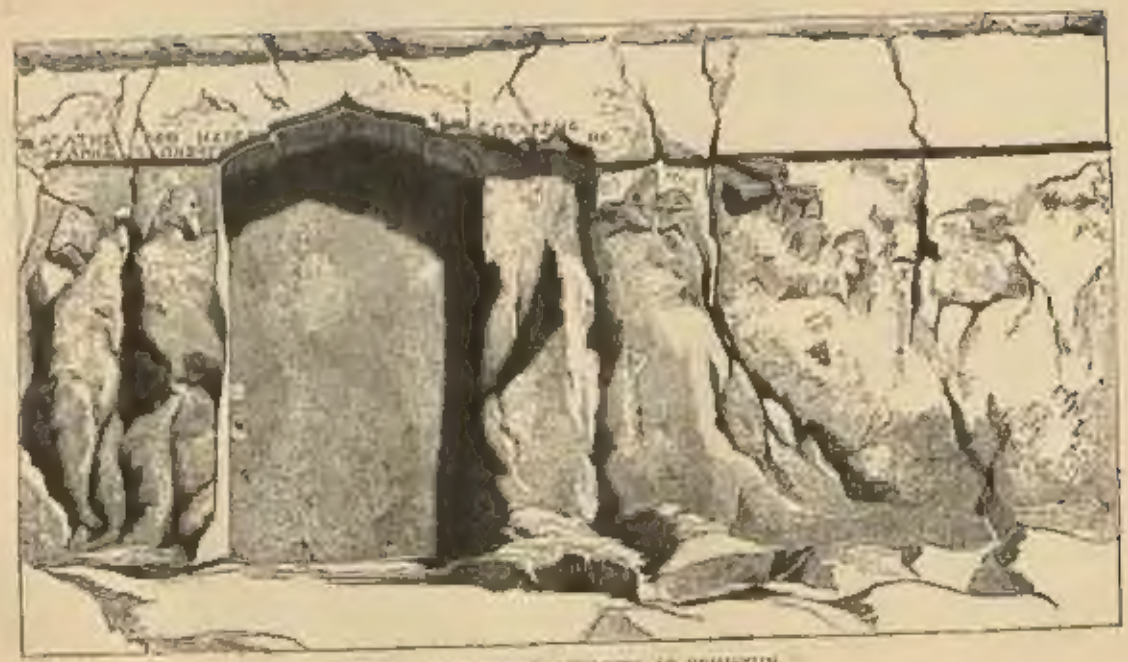

ROCK SCULPTURE OF GOTAMA AT BEHISTUN.

PARTHIA

21103

BY

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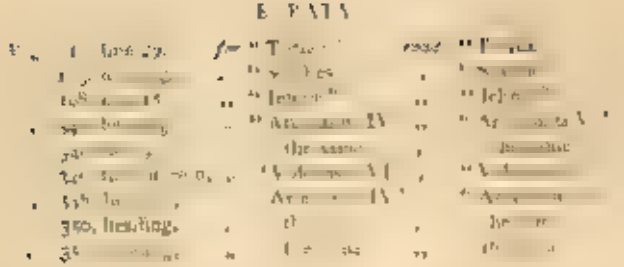

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THE STORY OF PARTHIA.

I

GEOGRAPHY.—PARTHIA PROPER, AND THE PARTHIAN EMPIRE.

PARTHIA Proper, the earliest home (so far as our knowledge extends) of the Parthian people, was Ancient Persia Proper and Macedonian Persia a tract of somewhat scanty dimensions. From the south-eastern corner of the Caspian Sea there extends, in a direction a little south of east, a narrowish mountain region connected at one extremity with the lofty Elburz range, which skirts the Caspian on the south, and at the other, with the Paropamisus, or Hindu Kush. On either side, northwards and southwards, stretch for hundreds of miles extensive sandy or gravelly deserts, that to the north known as the Desert of Khorassan or Khiva, and that to the south as the Great Salt Desert of Iran. Between these is a comparatively rich and productive tract reaching from the fifty-fourth to the sixty-first meridian, a distance of some seven degrees, or about three hundred miles with a breadth varying from two to three degrees, and averaging about one hundred and

seventy miles. This region, in the ancient times of which we have any distinct historical knowledge, was parcelled out into two countries, belonging to two different peoples and known respectively as Parthia and Hyrcania. The exact line of demarcation which separated the two it is impossible to trace, but there is sufficient proof, that while Hyrcania lay towards the north and west, the Parthians held the districts towards the east and south. The valleys of the Heirkh and the Gurgan belonged to the former while the regions south and east of these valleys, the skirt of the southern mountains from Damaghan to Shahrood, and the valleys of the Lejurd and the river of Nisabour, constituted the country of the latter.

If the limits of Parthia Proper be thus marked out, they will have corresponded nearly to the modern Persian province of Khorassan, that is to say, they will have extended from about Damaghan (long. 54° 20′ E.) on the west to the Heri-rud, or river of Herat, upon the east, and have comprised the modern districts of Damaghan, Shahrood, Sebzawar, Nisapur, Meshed, Tersheez, and Sheher-No. Its length, from east to west, will have been about three hundred miles, and its average width about a hundred and twenty. It will have contained an area of about 35,000 square miles, being thus about equal in size to Ireland, Bavaria, or St. Domingo.

The general character of the region is, as has been observed, mountainous. The mountain formation consists of four or five distinct ranges, having between them latitudinal valleys, with glens transverse to their courses. The valleys are often well

wooded [illegible] flat [illegible] at the foot of the outer ranges of hills is fertile, water abounds, and the streams gradually collect into rivers which are of a considerable size. Of these the principal are the Tejen, or river of Meshed, and the river of Nishapur. The Tejend rises from several sources in the central mountain range, anciently known as Labus or Lavanta, and now as Alatagh, and runs with a course considerably south of east past Meshed, to a point a little beyond the sixtieth meridian where it deflects towards the left, and runs first and a little north of east to the Hirmend or Hari, absorbing the Hermi as it passes a second and still sharper turn to the left, and flows with a northerly and northwesterly course past Sarakhs [illegible] a Russian post—along the foot of the northern Parthian range, now known as the Hills of the Kurds to a marsh in which it is swallowed up between the fifty-seventh and fifty-eighth meridians. The river of Nishapur is a mere stream. It rises from the mountains which on three sides enclose that city and flows southwards and south-westwards towards the Iranian desert. At times the water is entirely absorbed in the irrigation of the fertile plain immediately south of Nishapur, but the channel is always traceable, past Ferdows into the desert, and in some seasons it carries a certain quantity of water into that parched and arid region.

The valleys of these two streams are among the most fertile and productive portions of the entire territory, but anciently the tract which was most valued, and which supported the largest population seems to have been that which is now known as the

Asak, or "Saint" — the best cultivable country at the foot of the southern hills, intervening between them and the desert. Along this whole region, from Damaghan to Tershiz, the mountains send down a continued succession of ridges, rivulets, and rivers which make it easy at the expenditure of a little care and a small outlay to carry the life-giving element to a distance of four or five miles from their base. Some husbanding of the water may be needed, together with the creation of a system of *reservoirs* and *kanats*, or subterranean channels, but, if these be provided, the return is ample. The abundant remains of large cities scattered at intervals along the course of Asak is a sufficient indication of the beneficence of nature in this tract of country if it be only secured by a fair amount of human industry and skill.

On the other hand, the mountain tracts, of which the country so largely consists, offer a strong contrast to the valleys of the main streams, and to the southern strip of territory. They are for the most part barren and rugged, very scantily supplied with timber, and only in places capable of furnishing a tolerable pasturage to flocks and herds. They are remarkable, as they do not attain any great elevation. White Mount Demavend in the Elburz range south of the Caspian exceeds 20,000 feet, and the same elevation is reached, or exceeded, by many peaks in the Paropamisus, the greatest altitude of the Parthian range does not exceed ten thousand, or at the utmost eleven thousand feet. The northern range, called now the Daman-i-Koh, is the loftiest and the least known, the rudeness of the Kurdish tribes by which it is in-

habited region traversed the central range, called towards the west Mithrâ, and towards the east Mac-rabra, is of considerable power, while the southern range, called indifferently Ujuven and Jagnetan, is of about the same elevation.

The climate of Parthia Proper, according to ancient writers, was an excessive one, exceedingly hot in the low plains, and exceedingly cold in the mountains. But modern travellers are inclined to modify both statements. They tell us, that the winters, although protracted, are everywhere very inclement, the thermometer rarely sinking below ten or twelve degrees of Fahrenheit during the nights, and during the daytime rising, even in December and January, which are the coldest months, to forty or fifty. The winter, however, sets in early. Cold weather commences in October, and continues till nearly the end of March, when storms of sleet and hail are usual. A considerable quantity of snow falls in the earlier portion of the winter, and the valleys are scarcely clear of it till March. On the mountains it remains much longer, and forms the chief source of supply for the rivers during the spring and the early summer time. In the height of summer the heat is undoubtedly great, more especially in the region known as the "Atas," or "Sirat", and here the unwholesome wind which blows from the southern deserts is felt from time to time as a terrible scourge. But in the inland country the heat is at no time very intense, and the natives boast at the present day that they are not compelled by it to sleep upon their house-tops more than one month during the year.

The country thought to be described by modern travellers to be one chiefly occupied with wastes of sand and to produce the palm, the cotton-tree, the sycamore, the ash, the plane, the willow, the vine, the mulberry, the apricot, and the pomegranate. But these trees are chiefly found in the valleys, and it seems probable that, if the cultivated land were extended, the number of them would be very much greater. Strabo tells us that the territory *Gaza* or "Treasury" would produce wheat, millet, and various kinds of pulse, and that the vine and the olive flourished in it. Wheat has been found to yield in large quantities, and the soil is so rich that the ordinary return on wheat and barley under the system of cultivation is said to be at least fifty, while instances are said to have been known of the return of a hundred for one. The return from rice, according to one witness, is even four hundred for one! Gum abounds in the mountains, and honey is produced in great quantities. Wine, indeed, is forbidden by the Koran, but is largely consumed. The mountains contain rich stores of metals, including iron, lead, copper, and the turquoise.

Starting from this narrow but fairly productive region, the Parthians gradually brought under their dominion the greater portion of Western Asia. Very soon after establishing their power at Nisæa they made an attack on their nearest neighbour to the west, Hyrcania. Hyrcania was a country geographically connected, in the closest way, with Parthia. It was very similar in general character but richer, warmer, and altogether more desirable. It occupied the western

half of the mountain region already described (p. 2) —extending from the Caspian Sea to the Persian Gulf— whereof the eastern half was Parthia. Mainly composed of the two fertile valleys of the Gurgan and Attrek, with the mountain chains enclosing and bounding them it was a picturesque and richly wooded district almost as large as Parthia itself, and considerably more productive. Here on the slopes of the hills, grew the oak, the beech, the elm the alder the wild cherry here luxuriant vines sprang from the soil on every side, raising themselves aloft by the aid of their stronger sisters, and hanging in wild festoons from tree to tree; beneath their shade the ground was covered with flowers of various kind primroses, violets irises, hyacinths, and others of well known species, while in the flat land at the bottom of the valleys were meadows of the softest and tenderest grass equally affording to numerous flocks and herds an excellent and nourishing pasture. Vast quantities of game found shelter in the forests which covered the sides of the rivers, where the ground was for the most part marshy, large herds of wild boars were frequent, and afforded a variety to sportsmen. Altogether Hyrcania was a most valuable and desirable region and well deserved Strabo's description of it as highly favoured by heaven. Its fertility was extraordinary. We are told that a single vine in Hyrcania produced nine gallons of wine, and a single fig tree twenty baskets of figs, which could not require to be set up by the hand, but sprang sufficiently from the natural droppings of the last year's crop.

Not very long after the absorption of Hyrcania the Parthian arms were directed against the country of the Mardi. This region adjoined on Hyrcania towards the west and consisted mainly of the mountain tract which shuts in the Caspian on the south, forming a continuation of the most southern of the three Parthian chains and generally known under the appellation of Elburz. It is uncertain how far the Mardian territory extended towards the west, but probable that it was comprised within about two degrees, reaching from the neighbourhood of Hamadan to the great mountain of Demavend, or from long. 48° to 52° nearly. It is generally described as wholly rough and mountainous but probably included the tract between the foot of the mountains and the Caspian, the eastern portion of the modern Mazanderan. This is a rich flat plain of alluvial soil, but little raised above the level of the neighbouring sea, from which rise gently swelling hills, gradually increasing in elevation, and forming the supports of the lofty range which was the heart of the Mardian territory. Here high rocky summits alternated with dense pathless woods, the mountains being clothed on their northern flank nearly to the top with dwarf oaks, or with shrubs and brushwood, while their valleys were covered with forests of chestnuts, beeches, and cypress trees. At the present day the gardens and orchards of the natives, interspersed among the masses of primeval forest, are of the most superb character. The vegetation is luxuriant. Vines, ratans, pomegranates, lemons, and other fruits abound. Rice, hemp, sugar-canes

mulberries are cultivated with success, vines grow wild, and the valleys are strewn with shrubs and flowers of rare fragrance among which may be noted the rose, the honeysuckle, and the sweet briar. Nature however—never fully just, as usual—has balanced these extraordinary advantages with peculiar drawbacks; the tiger, scarcely known in any other part of Western Asia, here lurks in the jungles, ready to spring at any moment on the unwary traveler; inundations are frequent and carry desolation far and wide; the waters, which thus escape from the river-beds, stagnate in marshes, and during the summer and autumn heats, pestilential exhalations arise which destroy the stranger, and bring even the acclimatised native to the brink of the grave. The Mardian territory was thus of no great value to the conquerors, except as conducting to other and more valuable regions; a necessary link in the chain which was to unite East with West, and by means of which were to be relaid in one the scattered fragments of the empire which had been built up originally by Cyrus, had been destroyed by Alexander.

The third tract which the Parthians annexed was a portion of Media. A steep spur runs out from the Elburz mountain range about Lat. 35° 20′, which projects far into the desert, and forms a marked natural division between the regions west and east of it. The tract immediately to the west of the spur belonged to the ancient Media, and was known as Media Rhagiana from its capital city Rhages, situated in the angle between the spur and the main range, at no great distance from either. Parthia, soon

after the conquest of the Marduans, invaded this country, and obtained a footing in that part of Media called Choara, quite close to the spur, probably on the site now called Demawend. Here by degrees, the rest of Bactria was won, and the whole tract passed into the possession of the Parnians, as far eastward as Kabura-land and Arbiana as far as Kam. This was a district of considerable size and fertile and lying mainly between the south Kaspian and about eighty miles from the Caspian Gates to Kum. It was an elevated plain from three to four thousand feet above the sea-level, and a climate by no means, but a soil of different quality. Portions of it adjoined the road of the Persian kings, and were absolutely necessary while the remainder could not be spared for any. It possessed a certain amount of valuable salt water land, and was capable of the cultivation of the vine, though not plentifully to maintain the native population.

The next addition made to the Parthian empire was the region called by the Greeks Hyrcania. Hyrcania proper was a tract of country which has always been thickly peopled, and which had obtained several extensive conquests. Parnia in its greatest extent was a small state, and the district was merely the district from the Atrek to Asterabad, two important provinces known respectively as Tapuria and Hyrcania. The exact position of these tribes is unknown to us, but they must certainly be placed on the west of portions of the Persian territory, and probably were districts

wealth of the Parthians, either upon the Murghab, or upon the Oxus-basin, over the accession of territory gained by this conquest was very great.

But some extensive and most valuable conquests soon followed. Turning, for the present, towards the west, Parthia made war upon Media, the great country which had first arisen in Western Asia, and exercised a dominion which reached from the Caspian Gates to the Halys and from the mouth of the Araxes to the mountains of Isfahan. Subjected first by Persia, and then by Alexander the Great, she had since been pushed back to her own limits, and sat at the same time sometimes up into the province of Media Rhagiana, Media Magna, and Media Atropatene. The Parthians had presently overrun up, as already stated, Media herself, and they attacked Media Magna. There was an extensive tract of country between the Forty-second and the sixty-sixth meridians of longitude, from the Great Salt Desert of Iran upon the east to the main chain of Mount Zagros upon the west. Its breadth from north to south was about five degrees, or nearly three hundred and fifty miles; and its width from west to east was also five degrees, or about two hundred and forty miles. The entire area would have been much smaller than the vast Empire which it helped to form, but little less than the area of Great Britain and a little more than that of German Austria. The tract divides itself into two portions—the western, and the eastern. The western, which is crossed more than one half of the whole distance within the limits of the great mountain region known as Zagros, is a country of alternate

mountain and valley, with here and there a tolerably extensive plain very productive and for the most part picturesque and beautiful. The crests of the mountains are bare and rugged towards the summits but the interior ranges are tolerably well wooded to their top, while the valleys are full of magnificent orchards and gardens. The walnut the Oriental plane, the dwarf oak, the willow, and the poplar abound; while occasionally are to be seen the ash, and the terebinth or turpentine tree. The fruit trees in the orchards and gardens include brambles and mulberries, the apple the pear the quince, the plum the almond, the nut the chestnut the olive, the peach the nectarine, and the apricot. With this western region the eastern portion, contrasts that of Zagros where the mountains rise abruptly almost at once into the plain, but a vast gravelly or sandy plateau covered often with a saline efflorescence, called the "Kavir" and in places with a thick salt deposit, only scantily supplied with water from streams or wells which are often brackish, crossed in places by bare rocky ridges destitute of all vegetable mould and incapable of nourishing even a bush or a tuft of grass. Still, excepting where the salt efflorescence prevents it, the plateau can be made to produce good crops if only water be supplied in sufficient quantity. Hence the system of *Kanats*, which is of great antiquity. Everywhere the small streams and rills which descend from the mountains, and which, if left to themselves, would be almost immediately absorbed by the sands of the desert are led into subterranean channels, which are placed at a

considerable depth below the surface and conducted for many miles across the plain. Openings are made at intervals from which water may be drawn by means of a bucket for purposes of irrigation; and in this way a considerable portion of the plateau is brought into cultivation.

The conquest of Media Magna about denoted the extent of the Parthian dominion, while it also seemed to further suggestions of a most important character. On the western flank of Media Magna lay the rich and valuable country, known originally as Elam, and later on as Kissia or Susiana. It was an extensive tract of very productive territory interposed between the main chain of Zagros and the lower Tigris river, extending a distance of about five degrees, or three hundred and fifty miles from north-west to south-east, and having an average breadth of about a hundred and fifty, or a hundred and sixty miles, in the transverse direction. Like Media Magna, it consisted of two strongly contrasted regions. Towards the west was a broad tract of fertile alluvium, intervening between the Tigris and the mountains, well watered by numerous large streams—the Jerahi, the Karun, the Kerkhah, the Diala, and others—which are capable of giving an abundant irrigation to almost the whole of the low country. Above this region, towards the east and the south-east, was a still more pleasant district, composed of a tertiate mountain valley, and upland plain, abounding in beautiful glens, richly wooded, and full of gushing brooks and cool rapid rivers. Much of this region is of course uncultivable mountain, range

[illegible] range [illegible] from parts there [illegible] of the range extending to the east and west of the pass are rough and broken, and the lower slopes of the mountains are [illegible] cultivated, while the valleys teem with [illegible] and the [illegible] are covered with [illegible] The region [illegible] the western portion of Media Magna [illegible] it is a continuation [illegible] Above [illegible] of Behistun, it leaves the main road into the Bakhtiari country where it crosses over the ancient Persian [illegible] in the [illegible] the mountains become lower and more broken, and the valley narrower and less fertile.

The fifth Satrapy included that of the old Assyrian countries of Babylonia and Chaldæa, which seem to have subsisted in Parthian times as a single [illegible] Babylonia extended from the Persian Gulf to the latitude of the mouth of the Euphrates on the extreme northern limit of the alluvium, or to the vicinity of Hit on the Euphrates and Samarah on the Tigris, a distance of about four hundred miles. The greatest width was about one hundred and eighty miles, but the average width cannot be estimated at more than sixty or seventy, so that the area probably did not much exceed twenty-five thousand square miles. But the qualities of the soil were such as to [illegible] the exaggerations of the classical writers. According to Herodotus and others, wheat barley, and millet, which were the grains principally grown, yielded ordinarily a return of two hundred and in [illegible] instances of three hundred fold. Palm-groves

[illegible] the rivers and the state which the position of the ground [illegible] Under the early Assyrian kings, when the food of the court was supplied by each of the provinces in turn for a fixed portion of the year, however, had the duty of furnishing the supplies during [illegible] so that it was reckoned equal in respect of resources to all the rest of the empire. Irrigation was so easy in Babylonia that the whole country was brought under cultivation, and the [illegible] formed into a garden. Here [illegible] enjoyed all the advantages of an ancient civilization, and had only to maintain the works of earlier times—canals, sluices, dams and embankments—in order to obtain from a small portion of the country supplies of food equal to the wants of almost her entire population.

Beyond [illegible] in the opposite direction from Babylon, towards the east and the south-east. It stretched along the sea-coast as above [illegible] Persian Gulf from the river-mouths of the Euphrates near Mashkat to Cape Jask, a little outside the straits of Ormuz, and [illegible] Inland it reached to the neighbourhood of Hamadan on the west, and to the mountains of Kerman and Yezd eastward. In length it thus extended about [illegible] degrees of longitude, a distance of six hundred and twenty miles, while in width it covered five degrees of latitude, or nearly three hundred and fifty miles. The entire area must have been much short of one hundred and fifty thousand square miles. The character of the region, speaking broadly, was far inferior to that of either Babylonia or Susiana. Along the coast on the *Garmsir* or "warm country,"

soil is thus called was a valley that lay immediately contiguous with salt extending the whole length of the province, being a continuation of the flat region of Susiana but falling very much short of that region in all the qualities which make a territory valuable. The soil is poor, consisting of saltmarsh sand and clay. It is in Asterene that alone tract possesses, scarcely a single stream worthy of the name of river, and, lying as it does out of the northern tropic, the district is one of the hottest in Western Asia. Formerly, it was of very large extent, and it would have formed a province of considerable importance; but this I do not consider much more than one-tenth of the entire country of the other satrapy, thus a comparable portion—perhaps as much as half—was very little superior, consisting of salt or sandy deserts, especially those of Kerman and Yezd, which were almost wholly unproductive by nature, and capable of only a very scanty cultivation. But, between these two arid districts the stretch of hilly country which separated them was of a superior character, consisting of mountain, plain and valley intermixed, and for the most part fairly fertile. In places it is rich, picturesque, and romantic almost beyond imagination with lovely wooded dells, green mountain slopes and level plains suited for the production of crops of almost any description; but more commonly these features are absent, and there is a general look of sternness and barrenness which is unpleasant, or even forbidding. The supply of water is, almost everywhere, scanty. Scarcely any of the streams are

strong enough to reach the sea. After a short course they are either absorbed by the sand or form a small salt lake from which the superficial water is evaporated. Persia Proper deserves, on the whole, the description which its ancient inhabitants gave of it to Cyrus the Great—"a small land and rugged," a land on which subsistence can only be obtained by strenuous and continual labour, and where the very forms of climate are such as to brace and harden those who dwell in it.

Another country, probably subjugated about the same time as Media Magna, Susiana, Armenia, and Persia Proper, was Assyria. A region which had long previously attained a great wealth and importance, was at this period almost the country that lay between Mount Zagros and the Tigris, bounded on the east by Media Magna, on the north by Armenia, on the west by Mesopotamia, and on the south by Susiana and Babylonia. Its greatest length was about three hundred and twenty miles, and its average width about a hundred. It would thus have had an area of about thirty-two thousand square miles, or have been equal in size to Ireland. But these narrow limits were soon overpassed, partly by the fertility of the soil. The tract between the Zagros mountains and the Tigris is for the most part alluvium brought down by the rivers, which from time to time overflow their banks and spread their waters far and wide over the flat country. It produces excellent crops of wheat, barley, millet, and rice, besides grapes, figs, pomegranates, and peaches. The vine and the fig, olive and peach, are the ornaments of hill outposts of

Zagros, bore [illegible] in the earliest times the name was [illegible] Elymais, where [illegible], mat bore, [illegible], and other [illegible] were common. To the [illegible] produced [illegible] bitumen, and the petroleum springs, and salt.

[illegible] was the title assumed by [illegible] the [illegible] and the [illegible] Parthia had hitherto [illegible] the [illegible] Parthia [illegible] yet [illegible] but [illegible] which [illegible] the [illegible] Elymais [illegible] the great [illegible] the Parthians [illegible], Bactria began to [illegible] to have [illegible] In the war which [illegible] the two countries the success of the Parthians [illegible] For [illegible] the subjugation [illegible] Persia, Susiana, Assyria, and [illegible] Seleucia [illegible] It [illegible] to [illegible] of each of these countries.

Before Progress the nations from which the Parthian Empire proceeded [illegible] be considered as [illegible] the [illegible] of the Oxus or in other words [illegible] the [illegible] to [illegible] the great [illegible] about L. long

[illegible] to the west. The valley [illegible] the north by the Hazarat mountains, the Koh-i-baba mountains, while on the south it is bounded by the Paropamisus or Hindu Kush. It stands at the head of the Panjab tributary, whose sources are in the hills which take their origin. Its length [illegible] and the desert is about three hundred and sixty miles, while its width between the two mountain chains varies from a hundred and forty to two hundred and fifty miles. The area is probably twice as large as that of Parthia Proper, and may be estimated at about seventy thousand square miles. Most of the tract being situated at a high elevation above the sea-level is cold and infertile; but the lower portion of the valley, especially the country about the ancient capital, Bactra, now Balkh, is fairly [illegible] and the region between the Oxus and the Paropamisus—the southern moiety of the province—is reported as among the most valuable possessions of Afghanistan.

Margiana, or the district upon the Margus river (Murghab) adjoined Bactria upon the west and, though generally reckoned as distinct, was probably absorbed into it at an early period. It was mainly a narrow tract, cut off by desert on either side, extending along the course of the Margus river for a distance of some two hundred miles, and then spreading suddenly into a broad oasis of the very highest fertility. Known at once, and again in modern times as Merv it is still a region of some importance, and has recently been connected by railway with Askabad and Bokhara.

Aria lay along the course of the River Arius, now the Hari-rud, which, rising on the south side of the Paropamisus in Long. 67° 30′ E., runs westward, first through the mountains, and then among them, their northern flanks until about Herat are reached, it makes a sweep round to the north, and finding, or forcing a way through the chain, joins the Lake of Zurah or Khatun in lat. 32° nearly. The course of the stream until it makes its great bend measures between two hundred and seventy and two hundred and eighty miles; and this may be regarded as the length of Aria from east to west. Its width between the Paropamisus and the tract known as Drangiana or Sarangia is difficult to determine; but was certainly not great. It may have averaged about fifty miles; which would give for the entire area a size of about thirteen thousand square miles. The country was well watered, and tolerably fertile, but it was placed at too high an elevation to be more than moderately productive. Winter or Heat at the capital being more than three thousand feet above the sea level, and the rest of the country being for the most part considerably more elevated.

Drangiana, or Sarangia, which adjoined on Aria towards the south, was a region of much greater extent but of less fertility. It was the country watered by the streams which flow into the Hamun, or lake of Seistan, from the north east and the north. On the west it verged upon the great Iranian desert, and partook of its character; on the east it extended to the upper valley of the Kash river. It is difficult to determine its exact dimensions; but it must have

had at last domesticated that of Aria, and the entire superficies may not have been very much short of thirty thousand square miles.

Another country probably observed by Darius at this time was Sacastana or Seistan. Sacastana was the country immediately south of the Hamun or Great Salt Lake, in which the river Helmend ends (except on the very banks of the stream) it was almost wholly unproductive, and consisted of barren tracts, but with a few oases. Portions of it were, however, brought under cultivation by the Helmend itself and its banks; and thus its general character was alternately rocky, swampy, and sandy desert. Its extent was somewhat vague and indefinite since there were no marked boundaries, unless the Helmend and Hamun may be reckoned such towards the south. Eastward it melted into Sattagydia, southward into Gedrosia, and westward into the desert of Kerman.

Darius, in overrunning Sarangia and Sacastana carried with it, almost necessarily, the sovereignty over Arachosia, which adjoined those countries upon the east. Arachosia, named from the river Arachotus (Argandab), a main tributary of the Helmend, consisted of the mountain tract about Candahar and a portion of the adjacent desert, now known as that of Kelat. It was a large, but not very valuable country, and lay on the frontier of the Parthian Empire towards the south-east.

The power which had Hyrcania, Parthia, Aria, and Sarangia, was always predominant also in Sacastana, which bordered with the eastern and

...thwestern portions of the Iranian desert. The ... are scattered over the greater part of the central region where they form a scanty subsistence. That country, notwithstanding its great extent, was almost valueless, being incapable of cultivation, and producing no mineral except salt.

...ually unproductive and uninhabitable territory ... the whole south side of the Parthian and Arian mountain chain, commonly regarded as forming ... their main feature, was that of the Iranian depression east of the Caspian towards the south. This is ... of the country of the Chaonitis, known to moderns as the desert of Khorassan, which extends from the foot of the Bactrian Paropamisus and Hyrcanian hills to the old course of the Oxus, from its entrance on the desert to its ancient principal mouth. Consequently this is a very extensive country, not less than six hundred miles in length by three hundred miles in breadth. But its value is exceedingly slight, since except along the course of the Oxus, ... Amu Darya, it does not admit of ...

By the absorption of these various countries and ... Parthia obtained her first extensions towards ... and the north-east; but she was still unable to make important additions to her dominions on the ... of her empire, especially towards the ... At a comparatively early period, certainly ... Rome began, she made herself ... the extensive and central region of ... Parapotamia, was the first ...

between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, bounded on the north by Armenia and on the south by the Babylonian district. The country thus defined from north-west to south-east was at least three hundred and fifty miles in length, while its breadth cannot be estimated at much more than two hundred and sixty. But as in the plain the width is not always the same, the area, it is probable, fell short of fifty thousand square miles. Much of it was, and is still, barren and desolate; even the land watered by rivers, for instance, the tract between the Tigris and Euphrates, is in great part but towards the north there was formerly, as there are now, many fertile districts. Besides the valleys of the Tigris and Euphrates there were tracts of some considerable extent. Many parts produced plant timber, together with maize and grapes; the former grew chiefly in the district between Carchemish and Balukh, the latter in the range of hills which forms the eastern boundary of the valley of the Euphrates. The valleys of the rivers were also well wooded with groves of fruit trees, and provided with gardens of large extent, producing apples, pears, peaches, apricots, and mulberries.

During the period of the wars with Rome the limits of the Parthian Empire fluctuated greatly. Provinces were conquered and recovered, and new satrapies were made. Hence no single list of countries would be correct, and, as I have observed, this is not the place for tracing out these points in detail. These various changes will be considered in connexion with the question of Parthian extent and other kindred matters, presently. In order, however, to complete our sketch of this subject, we must arrange

under the readers notice two more districts—Media Atropatene and Armenia.

Media Atropatene which became ultimately a dependency of Parthia, was the tract directly west of the lower Caspian Sea, extending from the river Araxes Aras towards the north to the borders of Media Magna and Media Rhagiana towards the south. Westward it bordered on Armenia, with which it was sometimes connected politically. Its southern boundary lay almost along the line of the thirty-sixth parallel. It was thus very nearly a square extending from east to west about two hundred and forty, and from north to south for the space of about two hundred and twenty miles. The area did not include much short of fifty thousand square miles. Its chief rivers were the Aras and the Sefid rud; and it further contained within it the remarkable lake of Urumiyeh. The tract was mountainous, but fairly fertile with a cold climate in the winter, but a dry warm one during the summer months. It was a region well adapted to the habits of a people like the Persians, the nomad Persians.

Armenia, which lay to the west of the Caspian, and in the Parthian territory towards the north-west, the empire had reached its acme, lay north-west and partly north of Atropatene. It reached from the Caspian at the mouth of the Aras to the elbow of the Euphrates at about 38° 25′ north, a distance of about six hundred miles, and extended from Iberia in the north to Mount Niphates on the south a distance of rather more than two hundred miles. But Armenia was lozenge shaped, narrowing

gra dually towards both extremities, yet thus the area did not much exceed sixty thousand square miles. The character of the mountain country and that of Armenia was the same, but Armenia is found to have been a productive territory which exported wine to Babylon, and traded in the markets of Phœnicia with horses and mules (Ezek. xxvii. 14).

It would seem that the Parthian Empire when at the highest reach of prosperity extended from the Euphrates eastward to the Indus between the Indus upland and the Himalayas, about half a degree of latitude, or six hundred miles between its northern and southern frontiers. It entered the whole of modern Persia, a greater part of Afghanistan, much of Turkey in Asia, and some portions of Arabia. The population of the kingdom is said to have exceeded five hundred thousand square miles, or Afghanistan over two hundred thousand square miles. Kerman and Turkestan, provinces which are not Parthian, cannot be estimated to contain more than one hundred thousand square miles. The whole territory anciently within the empire of the Parthians at its greatest extent can scarcely have fallen far short of eight hundred thousand square miles. It would thus have been about equal in extent to France, Germany, Austria, and Turkey in Europe put together.

The boundaries of the empire were, upon the north, Iberia, the river Kur or Cyrus, the Caspian, the Oxus and the Hyrcanian or Elburz range, on the east the Indus, the Indian Ocean and the

II.

THE PARTHIANS OR PARTHIAN PEOPLE.

THE Parthians do not appear in history as a people until the time of Darius the son of Hystaspes (B.C. 521-485). There is no mention of them in the Old Testament, nor in the Assyrian Inscriptions, nor in the Zendavesta. We first find any record of their existence in the great Inscription of Darius at Behistun. They are there called the 'Parthava,' or "Parthavi," and appear as one of the nations with the "Varkani, or people of Hyrcania. Darius regards them as his subjects and accuses of their "revolting" against his father, Hystaspes, who seems to have been at the time their satrap, and fighting a battle with him within the limits of their own country. They were defeated with the loss of about ten thousand men in killed and prisoners, after which they submitted and returned to their allegiance.

From this the rest of the Achæmenian period (B.C. 515-331) we never hear of them but as faithful Persian subjects. They were assigned by Darius to his sixteenth satrapy, and united with the Arians, the Sattagydæ, and the Gandarians. They

took part in the expedition of his son Xerxes against Greece. They fought at Salamis and Platæa. We never hear of their joining in any revolt against the Persian monarchy. Their only attempt in the time of genuine ascendency at the beginning of the reign of Darius. If they did not offer a very strenuous resistance to Alexander it was probably because the Persian Empire had collapsed and the conqueror appeared to be irresistible.

Due credit to the Persian character with the fact that the Parthians were included in the midst of a group of purely Aryan tribes. The Hyrcanians, Carmanians, Margians, Arians of Herat, Bactrians, Sacæ, and Sogdians are held to be entirely Aryan, and it is certain that the Parthians, like the other people of the Iranian plateau, belonged to the Iranian family. They certainly affected, to a large extent, Persian names, e.g. Mithridates, Tiridates, Artabanus, Orodes, Kontarpes, Chosroes (Khosrau), Artaxias (Arshak), Arsaces (Arsaka in Persian), and some of the appellations proper to them are explicable by Aryan etymologies. "Phraates, for instance, has been generally connected with the Zend Frataraspa, which means like the Greek 'Philopator,' 'Lover of his father.' But conjectural explanations of names are an exceedingly unsafe basis for ethnological speculations. And it is certain that the Parthian names do not, as a general rule, suggest the idea of derivation from Aryan sources.

If we ask what the ancient writers have left on record with respect to the Parthian nationality, we

[illegible], in the first place a general agreement that they were Scyths. "The Parthian race is Scythic," says Arrian. "The Parthians," says Justin, in his "Epitome of Trogus Pompeius," "were a race of Scyths, who at a remote date separated themselves from the rest of the nation, and occupied the southern portion of the Chorasmian desert, whence they gradually spread themselves over the fertile region adjoining it." Strabo adds to this that the Scythic tribe whereto they belonged was that of the Dahæ; that their own proper and special name was Parni, or Aparni; and that they had emigrated at a remote period from the country to the north of the Palus Mæotis, or Sea of Azov, where they left the great mass of their fellow-countrymen. Some time after this the theory was started that they were Scyths whom Sesostris on his return from his supposed Scythian expedition brought into Asia and settled in the mountain tract south-east of the Caspian. We cannot put much faith in the details of any of these various statements, since, in the first place, they are contradictory; and, in the second, they are most of them highly improbable. Sesostris, for instance, if there ever was such a king, no more made an expedition into Scythia than into Lapland or Kamtschatka. No Egyptian monarch ever penetrated further north than the mountain chains of Taurus and Niphates. Arrian's story is a mere variant of the tale told to Herodotus and [illegible] by the [illegible] each more [illegible]

[illegible] it must be borne in mind that we depart [illegible] his native [illegible] the [illegible] [illegible] of [illegible] to [illegible] for the purpose of [illegible] [illegible] which he was ever likely to visit [illegible] Strabo [illegible] [illegible] incredible [illegible] the [illegible] to the [illegible] of the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] of [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] movements on their part [illegible] the [illegible] [illegible] movement in the distance traversed are [illegible] the most certain facts of ancient history, and it is difficult to see what trustworthy authority Strabo could have had for his [illegible] [illegible] information on which he speaks must have taken [illegible] at least six [illegible] years before his own time, and no history [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] of the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

a continued menace to their property and even [illegible]. There is always an underlying idea of d[illegible] and disparagement when we hear a Greek or a Roman call any race or people Scythic or Scythian, the term connotes to him gross ignorance of culture and refinement. It is not perhaps strictly ethnic, since it designates a life rather than a race, but it points to such a life as we have found the rudest and most primitive and as still prevail in the vast pastoral country which extends from the Caucasus, the Caspian, and the mountain chains of the central Asian regions to the shores of the great Arctic Sea.

It is certain that the ancestors of this race have belonged from a remote antiquity to the ethnic family generally known as Turanian. In the south they are of the Tatar or Turkish type, in the north, of the Finnish or Samoyede. Their language is agglutinate, and among its dialects are the principal to which the name Scythian has been given. They have large fleshy bodies, loose joints, and scanty beards and scanty hair. They live chiefly on horseback or in waggons. Still as a rule, they are far from effeminate. Nomadic horsemen often acquire aptness in the use of the bow and arrow, and to exposure to all weathers they have developed great endurance to many kinds of privations and still give serious trouble to their [illegible] neighbors.

The Scythian character of the Parthians was chiefly formed and their dominion won from Upper Asia, while the Persians [illegible] the Turanian [illegible]

family of nations. The presumption is strengthened by the little that we know of their language. Their names were not Semitic but Persian, which they would of course naturally be from contiguous and intermarriage, while the few words which Arrian and Isidore have certain Turanian characteristics. Among these may be mentioned first of all, the guttural termination found in Arsakes, Sinnakes, Barzhakes, Vasakes, Sanatrukes, Phraates, Orodes, &c., a termination which characterises the primitive Babylonian, the Iberian, and almost all the Turanian tongues. Beyond this it would not be difficult to suggest Turanian etymologies for a large number of Parthian names; but as such suggestions could only be "guesses at truth," not very much weight would attach to them.

The main argument for the Turanian character of the Parthian people is to be looked for in their physical and mental type, and in their manners and customs. The Parthians were the true large-limbed Turanian race, the heavy prominent features, the general fleshy appearance which characterise Turanian races. Their horses also seem to have had the merits and defects of the Turanian type of character. They were restless, quarrelsome, ready to take the aggressive, and on the whole brutal and cruel in their wars against weak races. But they were wanting in dash and impetuosity, in spirit, and in perseverance. They were strong on the defence than in attack, and as time went on became more and more unenterprising and sluggish. In the arts they were particularly barbarous, devoid of taste, and [illegible] Turanian patterns than they had [illegible] their eyes in the architecture

[illegible] Kurdistan, [illegible] that they [illegible] the [illegible] at Hatra, [illegible] Zoroaster [illegible] Greek art [illegible] they [illegible] [illegible] coins, but the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

Mogul sovereigns of Hindustan originated in the pastoral tribes of their Northern ancestors, and the imperial camp was [illegible] in the midst of extensive plains on the eastern bank of the river Nerbudda. Even to-day not unfrequently the Parthian dwells in a tent. He represents the [illegible] among [illegible] to [illegible] their numerous habits and regards the [illegible] he [illegible] was [illegible] to a [illegible] as a feature of the [illegible] of [illegible] for [illegible] of [illegible] times against the Uyats or warriors who had opposed them for centuries. The [illegible] of [illegible] but it was a [illegible] in the [illegible] and even [illegible] were attacked by the Parthians on the [illegible] of their [illegible].

Another [illegible] which the Parthians [illegible] at the rate of the primeval Turanian [illegible] was [illegible] of [illegible] and [illegible] a [illegible] great [illegible] administration and government. Like the [illegible] of Nadir Bahadur, the Mogul under Jenghiz Khan and Timour, like the Turks of the Middle Ages, and to some extent even in modern times, the Parthians possessed [illegible] against the governing or ruling [illegible]. They rarely [illegible] a great power, and they had [illegible] for many [illegible] heterogeneous mass of [illegible] nations, who could have had no love for them, yet were [illegible] by the [illegible] and other strong ties to remain [illegible] for the most part a [illegible] and [illegible] because [illegible], a [illegible] system was not [illegible] but it was [illegible], the [illegible]

permanently [illegible] people, and at the [illegible] of the empire, its limits were as extensive as they had ever been.

On the whole it may be said, that the Turanian character of the Imperial people [illegible] but very little improved appears to be in the highest degree probable. If we are right, we must regard them as the [illegible] who from a remote antiquity have roamed over the steppe region of Upper Asia from time to time bursting upon the south, and darkening or stopping the comparatively unwarlike movements of the warmer countries. We must view them as the congeners of the Huns, Avars, Khazars of the ancient world, of the Kalmucks, Usbegs, Eleuts, Usbegs, Turcomans, &c., of the present day. Perhaps their nearest representatives will be if we look to their primitive condition at the founding of their empire the modern Turcomans, who occupy nearly the same districts, if we find them at the period of their highest prosperity, the Usbegs. Like the Turcomans, they combine great military prowess and vigour with a remarkably strong assimilative power of government not very usual among Asiatics. Like them they retained at heart barbarous though they did to an extraordinary extent assimilate the refinements of civilisation. Like them, they never to any extent amalgamated with the people they conquered, but continued for centuries an exclusive community, [illegible] the country as [illegible] they overran.

III

[illegible]N OF WESTERN ASIA IN THE THIRD CEN[illegible] [illegible]ATION OF THE PARTHIAN STATE

The grand attempt of Alexander the Great to unite the East and West in a single monarchy, magnificent in conception and carried out in act with extraordinary energy and practical wisdom, so long as he was spared to conduct his enterprise in person, was frustrated in the first place by the unfortunate circumstance of his premature decease, and secondly by the want of ability among his successors. Although, among them, there were several who possessed considerable talent, there was no commanding personality of force sufficient to [illegible] the [illegible] and [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] either the [illegible] grandeur of conception or his powers of execution [illegible] can be imagined as under any circumstances succeeding in accomplishing his projects. The scheme therefore which the great Macedonian had conceived unhappily came to an end, and his effort to unite and consolidate led only to increased division and confusion. He left behind him at least twelve [illegible] of his power and [illegible] by [illegible] that the [illegible] breaking [illegible]

war among the competitors was prevented. Partition itself put out of the question for a few years and the wars of the Successors [illegible] for their own further changes, and [illegible] the empire into separate fragments. After a [illegible] the various competitors presented something like a [illegible] fittest, and [illegible] the close of the [illegible] century, after the great battle of Ipsus [illegible] the map of the Macedonian empire [illegible] three principal parts, which [illegible] for [illegible] three centuries formed the basis of the political [illegible] Europe and Western Asia. Macedonia, Asia Minor, Syria, and Egypt became the great powers of the time, and [illegible] the fortunes of these four powers the politics and wars of [illegible] formed the principal course of [illegible] to Christ will [illegible] next to [illegible] we shall [illegible].

Of these four great [illegible] the one with which the [illegible] Rome was [illegible] and by which the Seleucidæ [illegible] the Seleucidæ. Originally Satrap [illegible] Babylonia, Seleucus [illegible] Babylonia, and his [illegible] were such that his [illegible] and [illegible] became [illegible] of comparison with those [illegible] Cyrus. [illegible] Alexander [illegible] Seleucus [illegible] Babylon, [illegible] Asia. Seleucus [illegible] the Indus, added to [illegible] Persia [illegible] the important [illegible] Media and [illegible] After [illegible] Seleucus [illegible] the [illegible] Asia [illegible] among the [illegible] the district of Cappadocia, [illegible] Persia, Upper [illegible] Mesopotamia, and the

empire of the Parthians was about the same size or rather smaller, for by his own unassisted efforts, Odaenathus had added to all the eastern provinces of Mesopotamia, Upper Armenia, Assyria, Syria, Cappadocia, Hyrcania, Parthia, Persia, Susiana, Arabia Saracenica, Armenia, Sophene, Gordyena, and no small part of Egypt. The empire thus established extended from the Mediterranean on the west to the Euphrates and the Red or more correctly speaking the Erythraean sea, which stretched from Egypt and the frontiers towards the north to the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean southwards. Its extreme area could not have been much less than 1,500,000 square miles. Of these, some provinces, as we have seen, were but partially subdued, but the remainder was generally tranquil and enjoyed within its limits some of the very most productive regions in the whole world. The Mesopotamian lowland, the Orontes valley, the land between the Southern Caucasus and the mountains, the region about Mars and Bost were rich, their plains in Asia and Armenia-Minor grew corn in abundance. The fine pasture of Media and Armenia nourished excellent horses. Lucerne grew on the Euphrates supply of camels. Elephants in large numbers were readily procurable from India. Gold was very plentiful, many of the temples were furnished by several of the provinces and precious stones of various kinds abounded. Moreover for above ten centuries the precious metals and the most valuable kinds of merchandise had flowed from every quarter into the region and through the Macedonian empire has carried on a considerable commerce by land and by sea, yet the

[illegible] withstand the strain, and the [illegible] wealth which had come [illegible] from Asia, Babylonia and Media [illegible] was to be [illegible] in the [illegible] Seleucus [illegible]

It must be remembered that Western Asia was about to enjoy under the Seleucid princes an unusual and prosperous condition as has previously been pointed out. For [illegible] two centuries which had [illegible] between the [illegible] of the Persian Empire by [illegible] and its destruction by Alexander [illegible] But the [illegible] was soon [illegible] The Seleucid princes, instead of devoting themselves to the consolidation of their power in the vast region between the Indus and the Nile, turned all their attention towards the West, and entered into petty quarrels for small gains with [illegible] In this struggle the Ptolemies had the [illegible] Asia Minor these energies which would have been far better employed in securing what remained to the extensive dominions which they were [illegible] It was [illegible] of this having to do with the West, that the first Seleucus [illegible] his vast empire transcend the [illegible] of government from Lower Mesopotamia to Upper Syria, from the confines of the Egyptian to those of the Cilician. This movement had fatal consequences. Already has [illegible] contained within itself an element of weakness in its very great length, which cannot be estimated at less than [illegible] miles. To counteract this disadvantage a [illegible] central position for the capital was [illegible] The centre of [illegible] might have been

conveniently ruled from the old Median capital of Ecbatana, or the later Persian one at Susa. From Babylon, Seleucia, or Ctesiphon further to the west were ruled the Seleucid and Arsacid Seleucidæ, but in connection with each of these no blame would attach to him. But the question upon how many heads he removed the cares of government, one hundred miles further westward and ninety in a straight line from the Mediterranean, is not to be answered so short a time as to be interesting and more than a matter of the empire within a great length of time certain. The change removed the two great foundations of empire together, offended the pride of the Asiatics who saw the centre of the world transformed into a remote province, and gradually weakened the grasp of the government on those more eastern districts which were at once farthest from the new metropolis and most accustomed to the Hellenic character. Among the causes which led to the disintegration of the Seleucid kingdom there is none which deserves so well to be studied as the main cause of this. It was calculated at once to produce the desire to evolt, and to render the reduction of revolt peculiarly difficult, if not impossible.

The evil day however, might have been indefinitely postponed if not even averted altogether had the Seleucid princes rather established and maintained throughout their empire a vigorous and efficient administration of absolute government. They were at wars with the Parthians upon the West, the Ptolemies, the kings of Pergamus, and others

But the organisation of the Second Empire was more elastic. Instead of parcelling the system out regularly by Alexander, according to what the Persians had done, a framework was left of which the Asiatics by nation, the Macedonians and the Greeks were to fill in the details between them. The Asiatics were to be governed by their own satraps, who were left to administer their own laws and customs, and to collect the tribute. The Macedonians and Greeks were to be governed by Macedonian and Greek officials, who were to administer Greek law and Greek customs, and to collect the taxes. The Asiatics were to be treated as subjects, the Macedonians and Greeks as conquering race. The first idea was Alexander's, and after his death his successors fell back upon it. The same principle underlay the system of dyarchy which existed before Alexander's time in the Persian Empire, and before them perhaps in the Median. The system must have grown up naturally in many countries, and it is the principle that underlies the government of India by means of a Civil Service and of native princes. Several objections may be raised to Alexander's scheme. He left the office of satrap to none but Macedonians and Greeks. The satrap was, by means of a guard, to be maintained in authority over the Asiatics, who were to be employed in the main as soldiers, not officials. But the Greek or Macedonian was offered extra pay by virtue of his Greek or Macedonian parentage. Nothing was done to keep up the self-respect of the Asiatics or to soften the unpleasant sense which all races attach to being governed by foreigners. Even the superior science of the Greeks seems to have been disregarded. According to Strabo, it was a great advantage offered by a satrap to

an Asiatic subject, but stirred up the Parthians to their revolt. The story may not be true, but the currency given to it shows what conduct to these ancient tyrants like the kings of the Seleucid race might by then have come near the line to have been capable. It may be said that this account was no worse than that which the ancient rulers of Western Asia have received for many centuries at the hands of their Persian Moslem or Western classical historians, but even if this be true, with truth, but a new volume of the history of the human mind in ancient times would have to take into consideration the fact that the lapse of the Seleucids had created in the minds of the ancient world a tendency to suspect and to some extent to disbelieve in Asiatic despots, so that they may be credited if this be with some bitterness too easily, almost at the very height of their expectations, when the Seleucid revolt had still many years to run.

An active attention on the part of the Seleucids to the affairs of their successors in Asia Minor would perhaps have been possible, but their territory bordered that of the Parthians, of the kings of Pergamus and was liable to invasion from other quarters. But by planting themselves in the Orontes valley and the maritime districts which they could not reach, and by coming up with Pergamus and Egypt and even Macedonia, politics far more than was ever the case, they had made Seleucia practically their capital and they kept their eyes chiefly to the west of the Euphrates

they might certainly have averted to a large extent the entanglements into which they were drawn by their active policy and have been free to give their main attention to the basic sources of their power—the central and eastern provinces. But it may be doubted whether the wider abstention ever presented itself to the mind of any one of the early Seleucid princes. It was the fatal dream of each of them, as of the other "Successors," that possibly in his person might one day be reunited the whole of the territories which had been ruled by the Great Conqueror. Each Seleucid prince would have felt that he sacrificed his dearest and most cherished hopes if he had withdrawn from the regions of the west, and shunning entanglements and adventures in that quarter, had contented himself with efforts to consolidate a great power in the more inland and more thoroughly Asiatic portions of the empire.

The result was that, during the first half of the third century B.C. (to 223), the Seleucid princes were almost constantly engaged in disputes and wars in Asia Minor and Syria Proper, gave their personal superintendence to these operations, and bestowed but little attention on the affairs of the far East. So long as the streams of tribute poured regularly in from the subject provinces, and furnished regularly the required quotas of troops for service in the western wars, Seleucus and his successors, the first and second Antiochi were content. The satraps were left to manage the affairs of their provinces at their own discretion, and we cannot be surprised if they were

of a controlling hand led to various complications and disorders.

As time went on [illegible] would naturally increase and [illegible] but very probably [illegible] to a head in a few more years [illegible] of the state, [illegible] given by the character of the [illegible] and [illegible] never before assumed [illegible] to any monarch [illegible] and [illegible] that the [illegible] He was [illegible] even among [illegible] and the barbarians [illegible] at their [illegible] punished [illegible] the character and [illegible] would [illegible] encouraged to follow the bad example [illegible] their [illegible] by it to [illegible] contemptible a master.

It may be [illegible] has been [illegible] the [illegible]

ambitious aspirations on the part of persons similarly placed from the very beginning of the Macedonian period. Even at the time of Alexander's great conquests, a Persian satrap, Mazaces, succeeded in converting the satrapy of Upper Media thereafterward called Media Atropatene — to an independent sovereignty. Not long afterwards, Cappadocia had detached itself from the kingdom of Pontus, to which it had established its subjugation under Ariarathes, who became the founder of a dynasty. So likewise Bithynia, Paphlagonia, and Pontus, once Persian provinces, had revolted, and in each case the result had been the recovery of autonomy. Thus already in Western Asia, besides the Greco-Macedonian kingdoms which had been established by the "Successors of Alexander," there were existent some five or six states which had had their origin in successful rebellions.

Such were the circumstances under which in or about the year 250, which was the sixth year of Antiochus Theos, a great disturbance broke out in the extreme north-east of the Seleucid Empire. The first province to throw off the standard of revolt and proclaim itself an independent state was Bactria. This district had from a remote antiquity been one with special pretensions. The country was fertile and much of it readily defensible; the people were hardy and valiant; they had been generously treated with exceptional favour by the Persian monarchs; and they seem to have had traditions which assigned them a pre-eminence among the Asian nations at some indefinitely distant period. "Bactria with the

fifty barges" is celebrated in one of the most ancient portions of the Zend-Avesta. It remained a subject under the Greek Cyrus. Cyrus is said by some to have left it as an appanage to his son-in-law, Mardonius or Tarkondares. Under the Persians it was for satrapy usually, or at any rate frequently, a province of the royal family. Alexander has compared it with Crete, and only by probable efforts. It was therefore natural that disunion should make its first appearance in this quarter. The weak satrap of the time Diodotus, either disgusted with the conduct of Antiochus Theos or simply seeing in his weakness and general unpopularity an opportunity which it would be foolish to neglect, revolted about the year B.C. 256, assumed the style and title of king, struck coins stamped with his own name, established himself without any difficulty as king over the entire province. Thence engaged in war with the Egyptian monarch Ptolemy Philadelphus, did not even make an effort to put him down, and the Parthian ruler, without encountering any serious opposition, passed into the ranks of native Asiatic princes.

The example of successful revolt thus set could not well be barren of consequence. If one Asiatic province might throw off the yoke of the Seleucid with absolute impunity, why might not others? There seemed to be scarcely anything to prevent them. Syria, so far as we can discern, showed clearly in every way without any effort whatever to check the result or to punish it. For eighteen years no Syrian force came near the frontiers. Arsakes was permitted to consolidate his kingdom and erect his

[illegible] was subject, without any interference on the part of Bactria, merely to the [illegible] power in Asiatic politics for [illegible] two centuries.

It was about six years after the establishment of Bactrian independence that the Parthians, having followed the pattern set it by its neighbour, and detached itself from the Seleucid Empire. The circumstances, however, under which the severance took place were very different in the two cases. History has not merely repeated itself. In Bactria the Greek satrap took the lead, and the Bactrian kingdom was, at any rate at its commencement, as thoroughly Hellenic as that of the Seleucidæ. But in Parthia Greek rule was from the first cast aside. The native Asiatics rebelled against their masters. A people of a rude and [illegible] type, coarse and savage but brave and [illegible] rose up against the polished but comparatively effeminate Greeks, who held them in subjection and contempt, and succeeded in establishing their independence. The Parthian kingdom was therefore purely Iranic. It appeared to partake of Scythic habits, and to the Greek universally it took towards the stranger a hostile attitude. It set itself to undo the work of Alexander, to cast out the Europeans, and recover for the native race the possession of its own country. "Asia for the Asiatics" was its motto. It was content almost as heartily to be rid of Syria as though it had never had a connection with it. It came at sometimes to make a temporary alliance with the former kingdom. It knew not what [illegible] sympathy and popularity in the [illegible] it would find represented to them the cause of [illegible] and autocracy. Arsaces

effected for Parthia that result. [illegible] strove to effect [illegible] [illegible] had [illegible] [illegible] for [illegible] and [illegible] for [illegible].

The circumstances of the revolt of Parthia are variously narrated by ancient authors. According to [illegible] Strabo [illegible] by [illegible] Arsaces [illegible] who did not approve of the [illegible] of [illegible], and, when [illegible] successful, [illegible] the [illegible] and transferred his residence to Parthia, where he stirred up an insurrection against the [illegible], and, succeeding in the attempt, [illegible] the [illegible] as their [illegible]. But it is [illegible] improbable [illegible] have [illegible] under such circumstances; and it is fatal to the narrative that every other account connects the [illegible] [illegible] a Parthian or [illegible] a Parthian. Arrian [illegible] that Arsaces and his brother Tiridates, were Parthians, descendants of [illegible], the son of Arsaces, that they revolted against the satrap of Antiochus. [illegible] by name Pherecles, on account of a gross insult which he had offered to one of them; and that finally, having [illegible] the [illegible] they [illegible] Parthia independent, and set up a government of their own. Strabo, while giving [illegible] the same story on the subject, [illegible] in his own mind, he accepts the following account: "Arsaces was a Scythian, a chief among the Parni, a Dahan tribe, who inhabited the banks of the Ochus (Attrek). Soon after the establishment of [illegible] independence he entered Parthia at the head of a body of his countrymen.

men and succeeded in making himself master of the F[illegible]ly, Justin, who [illegible] here [illegible], follows Trogus Pompeius, a writer of the Augustan age, expresses himself as follows: "Arsaces, having been long accustomed to live by robbery and rapine, attacked the Parthians with a predatory band, [illegible] their satrap Andragoras, [illegible] the supreme authority." This last account seems fairly probable [illegible] from Arrian's. If Arsaces was a [illegible] chief [illegible] accustomed to make forays into the territory [illegible] of Parthia from the Chorasmian [illegible] the Greek satrap [illegible] him [illegible] would be [illegible] that the Parthians [illegible] were of a [illegible] race [illegible] with his [illegible] as to invite him to place himself at their head. An oppressed people [illegible] the [illegible] of an allied tribe, [illegible] and promises their deliverance from their oppressors.

The [illegible] of the Parthian [illegible] was [illegible] 250 [illegible] the eleventh year of Antiochus [illegible] Antiochus was at that time engaged in [illegible] conflict with Ptolemy Philadelphus, King of Egypt, which, however, was brought to a close in the following year by his marriage with Berenice, Ptolemy's daughter. It might have been expected that as soon as his hands were free, he would have turned his attention to [illegible] at any rate to [illegible] Antiochus lacked either the [illegible] to engage in a fresh war. He was selfish [illegible] in his habits, and seems to have preferred the delights of

repose and the soft seductions of Antioch to the perils and hardships of a campaign in the rough Caspian region. At any rate, he remained quietly at home while Arsaces consolidated his power, outlived those who for one reason or another resisted his authority, and established firmly around the throne. His capital appears to have been Hecatompylus, which had been built by Alexander in the valley of the Gurghan river. According to some late authorities of no account, he came to a violent end, having been killed in battle by a spear thrust, which penetrated his side. It is certain that he left a son

reigned who was afterwards known as Arsaces by his brother, Tiridates, the second Parthian monarch.

Tiridates, on ascending the throne, followed a practice not very uncommon in the East and adopted his brother's name as a title of honour, assuming, as Arsaces the Second. He is the first Parthian king, of whom we possess contemporary medals. The coins struck by Arsaces II commence the Parthian series and present to us a monarch of strongly marked features, with a large eye, a prominent, slightly aquiline nose, a projecting chin, and an entire absence of hair. He wears upon his head a curious cap or helmet, with lappets on either side

that reach to the shoulders, and has around his forehead and above it a coronal of pearls, apparently of a large size. On the reverse side of his coins he exhibits the figure of a man seated on a sort of stool, and holding out in front of him a string bow, with the string uppermost. This may be either a representation of himself in his war costume or an ideal figure of a Parthian god; but is probably the former. Tiridates does upon his coins the title either of "King," or of "Great King." The coins which they bear are Greek, as is that of almost all the kings his successors. The coins from the Seleucid mint.

Tiridates was an able and active monarch. He had the good fortune to hold the throne for a period of above thirty years, and had thus ample space for the development of his talents and for completing the organization of the kingdom. Having rescued Parthia from her position of semi-vassalage, and established her as a united and powerful monarchy, enlarged in its boundaries, strengthened in its resources, in alliance with its nearest and most formidable neighbour and triumphant over the great power of Syria, which had hoped to bring it once more into subjection. He witnessed some extraordinary movements, and encountered affairs during their progress with prudence and moderation. He was more than once brought into imminent danger, but succeeded in effectually protecting himself. He made a judicious use of the opportunities which the distracted condition of Western Asia at his time presented to him, and might well be considered as he was by many, a sort of second founder of the State.

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It was within two years of the accession of Tiridates to the Parthian throne that one of those vast but transient movements to which Asia is subject but which are rare occurrences in Europe, swept over Western Asia. Pacorus, Tiridates, the son of Phraates, had succeeded to his father's throne in [illegible] year of Seleucus 345, [illegible] Vologeses I, and was a party to the war which followed, but at first carried everything before him. Having taken Antioch he crossed the Euphrates and in the course of a couple of years subdued or reduced [illegible] of Mesopotamia, Assyria, Babylonia, Susiana, Media and Persia, whose [illegible] submitted to him without resistance. He went to reign as far as Babylon and re[illegible] his power was probably not yet somewhat unduly to [illegible] fronts [illegible] by compelling [illegible] countries to [illegible] the most [illegible] and worked at which were to be found there, and [illegible] the [illegible] for the [illegible] of Alexandria. He was even heavy [illegible] on the countries which had [illegible] to him, and although [illegible] treaty [illegible] with a [illegible] that was [illegible] Rome and Parthia [illegible] but [illegible] [illegible] at his [illegible] [illegible] Here [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] the distance of a thousand miles from the banks of the Nile to [illegible] the two Euphrates, without [illegible] [illegible], a check, and who was threatening to [illegible] the [illegible] of Alexander. What

[illegible] could the little [illegible] state hope [illegible] to [illegible]? It [illegible] the heart [illegible] to hear that while the conqueror was [illegible] the spoils of victory in his newly subjugated provinces, a [illegible] had broken out in his own land which had [illegible] to withdraw his troops suddenly [illegible] 235 [illegible] evacuate the territory which he had [illegible]. Thus his invasion proved to be a raid rather than a real conquest and, instead of damaging [illegible], had rather the effect of improving her position and contributing to the [illegible] of her power. [illegible] Seleucus [illegible] her sway over [illegible] but [illegible] as [illegible] she was [illegible] for trouble than she had been [illegible] her [illegible] prestige [illegible] [illegible] Hyrcania [illegible] and [illegible] distant dependency, succeeded in [illegible] it and detaching it from the empire of the Seleucidae.

[illegible] was thus [illegible] to the [illegible] charge [illegible] which he was [illegible] unless he was prepared to [illegible] in [illegible]. [illegible] was not [illegible] Seleucus [illegible] was [illegible] Hyrcania [illegible] immediately [illegible] put [illegible]

peace with his brother Antiochus Hierax against whom he was at the time contending, and having collected a large army marched away to the East. He did not, however, at once invade Parthia, but, reflecting that it was best to be right entered into negotiations with the revolted Persian king, Tiridates, and married one of his daughters to Tiridates. It must be supposed that he represented to Tiridates that their common foe was as much a danger to Persia as to Syria, the head of a movement which was directed against Hellenism, and which aimed at putting down Persian rule as well as Syrian. At any rate he succeeded in gaining Tiridates to his cause, and the confederate armies having crossed their frontiers proceeded to invade the territory of the Parthian sovereign. Tiridates did not await their attack. Regarding himself as overmatched, he quitted his country, and fled northwards into the mountainous region between the Oxus and the Jaxartes, where he took refuge with the Scythic tribe, called the Aspasiacæ, which was powerful at that period. The Aspasiacæ probably furnished troops, for he did not remain long in retirement. Not hearing that the first Diodotus, the king of Sogdiana, had died, he contrived to draw over to his side Diodotus II., the ally of Antiochus, and in conjunction with him, gave Seleucus battle, and completely defeated his army. Seleucus retreated hastily to Antioch, and renewed the struggle with his brother, which he eventually overcame; but, having carried with him by his expedition the flower of his army, he made no further attempts against either the independence or the Parthian power.

This victory was at first regarded by the Parthians as a sort of second beginning of their

independence. Hitherto the kingdom had existed precariously and as it were by sufferance. From the day that the revolt took place it was certain that sooner or later Syria would reclaim, and make an attempt to recover its lost territory. Until a battle had been fought, until the new monarchy had measured its strength against that of its former masters, it was impossible for any one to feel secure that it would be able to maintain its existence. The victory gained by Tiridates over Seleucus Callinicus put an end to these doubts. It proved to the world at large as well as to the Parthians themselves that they had nothing to fear—that they were strong enough to preserve their freedom. If we consider the enormous disproportion between the military strength and resources of the narrow Parthian state and the vast Syrian empire—if we remember that the one comprised at this time about fifty thousand, and the other about a million of square miles, that the one had mounted the wealth of Crœsus while the other was probably as poor as any province in Asia, that the one possessed the Macedonian arm, tactics, and tactics, while the other knew only the rude warfare of the steppes, the result of the battle cannot but be regarded as surprising. Still it was a result that proceeded, and it must have been a legitimate one. It drew another to the many instances, where a small but brave people bent on resisting foreign aggression have, when standing on their defence on their own territory, proved more than a match for the largest force that a comparatively strong power could bring against them. It reminds us of Marathon,

peace with his brother Antiochus Hierax, against whom he was at the time contending, and having collected a large army, marched away to the East. He did not however at once invade Parthia, but, deflecting his course, first fought certain battles with the revolted Bactrians, Diodotus, and Euthydemus, who had usurped the throne. It may be supposed that he espoused the Parthian cause as the common foe, as much as in order to restore to Syria the head of a movement which was directed against Hellenism and was hardly so much at putting down Bactria as Syria. At any rate he succeeded in getting Diodotus to his side, and the confederate monarchs, having united their forces, proceeded to invade the territory of the Parthian sovereign. Parthates did not await their onset. Regarding himself as overmatched, he quitted his country and fled northwards into the region between the Oxus and the Jaxartes, where he took refuge with the Scythian tribes of the Aspasiacæ, who were powerful at this period. The Aspasiacæ, probably not liking his people, he did not remain long to retrench. Just hearing, that the first Diodotus, the ally of Seleucus, had been contrived to draw over to his side Diodotus II., the ally of Arsaces, and in conjunction with him gave Seleucus battle and completely defeated his army. Seleucus retreated hastily to Babylon, and resumed his struggle with his brother, which he eventually overcame; but having learned wisdom by experience, he refrained from further attempts against either the dominion of the Parthian power.

This victory was also regarded by the Parthians as a seal of success, opening of their

tolerated once. Hitherto the kingdom has existed precariously and as it were by sufferance. From the day that the revolt took place, it was certain that some time or other, Syria would reclaim, and make an attempt to recover, its lost territory. Until a battle had been fought, until the new monarchy had measured its strength against that of its former mistress, it was impossible for anyone to feel secure that it would be able to maintain its existence. The victory gained by Judates over Seleucus has put an end to these doubts. It proved to the world at large, as well as to the Parthians themselves, that they had nothing to fear—that they were strong enough to preserve their freedom. If we consider the enormous disproportion between the military strength and resources of the narrow Parthian state and the vast Syrian Empire—if we remember that the one comprised at the time about fifty thousand square miles, the other above a million of square miles; that the one had inherited the warlike habits of ages, while the other was probably as great as ever a province of Asia that had once possessed the Macedonian arms, from long disuse of warlike tactics, while the former knew only the rude warfare of the Steppes, the result of the struggle cannot be regarded as doubtful. Still it was not without a precedent, and so has not been without a parallel. To add another to the many instances where a small but brave people, bent on resisting foreign domination, have when standing on their defence on their own territory proved more than a match for the utmost force that a large and comparatively strength could bring against them. Fifteen years after Mara-

of Bannockburn or of Morgarten. We may not agree [illegible] with [illegible] for [illegible] of the type [illegible] by Alexander into Asia, was [illegible] by [illegible] and [illegible] but we cannot [illegible] the spectacle of a handful of [illegible] men determinedly resisting in the fastnesses of their native land a host of [illegible] and [illegible] The Parthians themselves were so impressed with the importance of the conflict that they preserved the memory [illegible] their [illegible]

It is possible that [illegible] his [illegible] from [illegible] to [illegible] free [illegible] Parthian [illegible] his pleasure. But on his return to [illegible], [illegible] against his authority, and the proceedings of Attalus, King of Pergamus, were [illegible] was engaged in [illegible] from the time of his return from [illegible] 235 [illegible] He [illegible] the strength [illegible] kingdom as he pleased. [illegible] the latter [illegible] for the space of above twenty [illegible]

of strong forts, crowded with soldiers, and thus fortified the Parthian king readily found plenty of guards in them, and carefully selected a site for a new city which he probably proposed to make, and perhaps actually made his capital. The situation chosen was one in the mountain range known as Zapaortenon, where a valley was found, surrounded on all sides by precipitous rocks, and placed in the middle of a plain of extraordinary fertility. Vineyard and apple-orchard, streams of water, rushed to the very brink of the valley. The soil was so rich that it scarcely required cultivation, and the woods were so full of game as to afford excellent sport to hunters. The city itself was called Dara, which the Greeks and Romans changed into Dareium. Its exact site is unknown, but it seems to have lain towards the east, and was probably not very far from the now sacred city of Meshed.

We may account for the desire of Tiridates to establish a new capital by the natural jealousy of the Parthians towards the Greeks, and the fact that Hecatompylos, which had been both the seat of government and a thoroughly Greek town, having been built by Alexander the Great and peopled mainly by Greek settlers. The Parthians, as we shall see, had not yet, at this time, fully learnt to look with favour for their capital on the spot selected to hold the entrance into Parthia proper, but were content to occupy, as the nucleus of their empire, a district so extensive, when their prospects were not yet bright, an instinctive feeling of repugnance to it there to shrink

from sharing a locality with his forces and make the experiment of having for their headquarters a city wholly their own. The experiment did not altogether succeed. Either Hecatompylos had natural advantages even greater than those of Dara, or, as the growth of the Parthian power was mainly towards the west the eastward position of the latter was found inconvenient. After a short trial, the successors of Tiridates ceased to reside at Dara, and Hecatompylos became once more the Parthian capital and the seat of Parthian government.

Tiridates, having done his best according to his

COIN OF ARTABANUS I.

lights for the security of Parthia from without and for her prosperity within, died peacefully after a reign which seems to have lasted thirty-four years, and which lasted probably from B.C. 238 to B.C. 214. He left his throne to a son, named Artabanus, who, like his father took the Parthian name of Arsaces, and is known in history as Arsaces the Third.

Artabanus I. if we may judge by his coins was not unlike his father in appearance, having the same receding and slightly aquiline nose and the same large eye, but he differed from his father in possessing abundance of hair and wearing a long beard. He has discarded, moreover, the cap of Tiridates and

instead of it wears his own hair which he confines with a band the custom passing from the forehead to the ear-flap, from which it is carried back behind. He takes the later legend of his coins ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ ΜΕΓΑΣ ΑΡΣΑΚΟΥ "Arsaces, the Great King."

It was the aim of Artabanus to pursue his father's aggressive policy and further enlarge the limits of the kingdom. He was scarcely seated upon the throne when he entered upon a struggle against Antiochus the Great, the second son of Seleucus Callinicus, who had inherited the Syrian crown in B.C. 223, and was engaged in a contest with one of the satraps of Asia Minor named Achæus. Proceeding westward along the skirts of the mountains he made his way to Ecbatana in Media, receiving the submission of the various districts as he went, and materially adding to his dominions through the entire tract between Hyrcania and the Zagros mountain-chain. From this coveted post on the threatened side of the Low-lying countries of the Mesopotamian plain and Syria, he was ready to oppose another campaign to reach the Euphrates. The situation was most critical for Syria, and Antiochus, recognising his peril, bent all his energies to meet and overcome it. Fortunately he had just crushed Achæus and was able without greatly exposing himself to serious loss in the West to collect and lead a vast expedition against the East. With an army of a hundred thousand foot and twenty thousand horse he set out for Media in the spring of B.C. 213, recovered Ecbatana without a battle, and thence pressed eastward after his startled enemy, who retreated as he advanced. In vain Artabanus

attempts [illegible] progress [illegible] or [illegible] the [illegible] done, the state would [illegible] necessarily [illegible] Antiochus sought the [illegible] of their wars [illegible] from [illegible] path. He then [illegible] against Parthia, [illegible] the enemy's country [illegible] [illegible] battle the chief [illegible] Hecatompylos.

Arsaces [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

ing to him that was by the usual bane of eastern courts, jealousy. Parthia came out of the struggle with the Great Antiochus unscathed: she did not even have to cede to her conquered dependency of Hyrcania. Artabanus moreover has the honour of being admitted to the number of the Great King's allies. After Antiochus had turned his attention to the affairs of Bactria, and the remnant left had hastily arranged their return by way of Arachosia, Drangiana, and Kerman to his western possessions, c. 206

The relations of Artaxias, however honourable

COIN OF PHRAATES

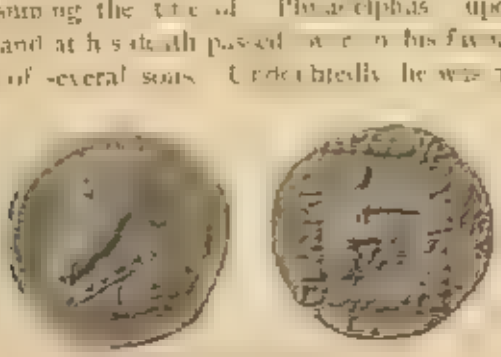
to Parthia, must have left her weakened and exhausted by her vast and astonishing efforts. She had been taxed almost beyond her strength and must have needed a breathing space to recruit and recover herself. Artabanus himself remained at peace during the rest of his reign, and his son and successor Phraates, followed his example. It was not till B.C. 181 that the fifth Arsacid, Phraates I, son of Priapatius having succeeded the throne, renewed the policy of aggression entered on by Mithradates and further extended the dominion of Parthia to the region south

of the Caspian. The great Antiochus was dead. His successor, Seleucus IV. Philopator, was a weak and unenterprising prince whom the defeat of Magnesia had cowed, and who regarded inaction as his only security. Aware probably of this condition of affairs Phraates early in his reign, invaded the country of the Mardi, which lay in the mountain tract south of the Caspian Sea overran it, and added it to his territories. Successful thus far, he proceeded to make an encroachment on Media Atropatene, the district between the Caspian Gates and Media Magna, by occupying the tract immediately west of the Gates and burning there the important city of Charax, which he garrisoned with Mardians. Thus was an advance of the Parthian Terminus towards the west by a distance of nearly two hundred miles—an advance, not so much important in itself as in the indication which it furnished at once of Parthian aggressiveness and of Syrian inability to withstand it. The conquests of Phraates added little either to the military strength or to the resources of his kingdom, but they were prophetic of the future. They foreshadowed that gradual wearing of the Syrian and advance of the Parthian state which is the chief fact of West Asian history in the two centuries immediately preceding our era, and which was to make itself startlingly apparent within the next few years, during the reign of the sixth Arsaces.

IV.

FIRST PERIOD OF EXTENSIVE CONQUEST—REIGN OF MITHRIDATES I.

MITHRIDATES THE FIRST, a brother of Phraates, was nominated to the king's office by his predecessor who had shown his affection for him during his life by assuming the title of Philadelphus upon his coins, and at his death passed over in his favour the claims of several sons. Under chiefly he was born



COIN OF MITHRIDATES I.

"king of men"—greater, not by nature as fitter to rule than any other mortal among his contemporaries. He had a physiognomy which was at once intelligent, strong, and dignified. He was ambitious, but not possessed of an ambition which was likely to "overleap itself"—strict but not cruel, brave,

character, a good general, an excellent administrator, a remarkable [illegible] under his government, [illegible] by [illegible] The [illegible] of his [illegible] [illegible] Demetrius, [illegible] apparently between the [illegible] of Caucasus on the one side and the river [illegible], or [illegible], on the other [illegible] within the space of thirty-seven years, which was the time that [illegible] into a great and [illegible] empire. It is not too much to say that [illegible] have remained to the end [illegible] the Syrian [illegible] and [illegible] Rome to [illegible] after [illegible] magnificence and obscurity.

To [illegible] which [illegible] change [illegible] the [illegible] of power [illegible] that we [illegible] Western Asia [illegible] the [illegible] century before [illegible] and [illegible] the course [illegible] as the [illegible] the Syrian [illegible].

The [illegible] by Diodotus, lay [illegible] the [illegible] the Persian [illegible] in the long and broad valley of the Oxus, from its sources in the Pamir to its [illegible] on the Khorasmian Desert. The [illegible] the [illegible] of the range continued to be [illegible] and were [illegible], by Seleucus Nicator, as [illegible] within the limits of his [illegible]. But it was not long before the empire of Alexander in these parts began to crumble and decay. Iranian [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible] Chandragupta and Seleucus, asserted their rights over the Region of the Five Rivers [illegible] and even over the greater portion of [illegible] Greek dominion was swept away. At the time when Bactria having had its independence acknowledged by Antiochus the Great, felt itself at liberty to embark in ambitious enterprises as Parthia had done, the Græco-Macedonian sway over the tracts between Parthia and the Sutlej was either swept away altogether, or reduced to a mere shadow and pretension, the land Bactrian monarch was not afraid of provoking hostilities from Syria when, about B.C. 208, he began his aggressive career in this direction. Over him and under his successor Demetrius in the twenty years between B.C. 208 and B.C. 187 their conquest was pushed as far as the Punjab region, Cabul and Candahar were overrun, and the southern side of the mountains occupied from the Paropamisus to the Indus. [illegible] Eucratides about B.C. 175, stretched his sway still further into the Punjab region, but with less permanent results so far as his regal power was concerned. Nay, there and contemporaneously denuded of troops, these conquests began to slip from his grasp. The Scythian hordes of the Steppes saw their opportunity and bursting into Bactria, turned it with fire and sword even [illegible] portion of it, across the Oxus valley.

While matters were thus progressing in the East, and the Bactrian princes attempting enterprises [illegible] were [illegible] rather than [illegible] the [illegible] on their own sway, the

Seleucid monarchs in the West were also becoming more and more entangled in difficulties, partly of their own creation, partly brought about by the ambition of pretenders. Antiochus the Great, shortly after his return from the eastern provinces, became embroiled with the Romans (B.C. 192), who dealt his power a severe blow at the defeat of Magnesia (B.C. 190), and further weakened it by the support which they lent to the kings of Pergamus, which was now the ruling state in Asia Minor. The weakness of Antiochus encouraged Armenia to revolt and subject Syria another province (B.C. 189). Troubles began to break out in Judæa, consequent upon the extinction of the Seleucidæ (B.C. 187). Eleven years later (B.C. 176) there was a lull of the clouds, and Syria seemed about to recover herself through the courage and energy of the fourth Antiochus (Epiphanes). But the losses raised by his successes in Egypt (B.C. 171-168) and Armenia (B.C. 165) were destroyed by his unwise conduct towards the Jews, whose just prejudices he permanently alienated, and erected into a hostile state upon his southern border (B.C. 168-166). Epiphanes having not only plundered and desecrated the Temple, but having set himself to eradicate utterly the Jewish religion, and completely Hellenise the people, was met with the most determined resistance on the part of a moiety of the nation. A patriot party rose up under devoted leaders who asserted and in the end secured, the civil, religious, and political freedom of their country. Not alone during the remaining years of Epiphanes, but for half a century after his death, throughout seven reigns, the

struggle continued, Judea [illegible] advantage of every trouble and difficulty in Syria to detach herself more and more completely from her oppressor, and being a continued thorn in her side, a constant source of weakness preventing more than anything else the recovery of her power. The triumph which Epiphanes had obtained in the distant Armenia, where he defeated and captured the king Artaxias, was a poor set-off against the foe which he had created for himself at his doors through his cruelty and misgovernance. Nor did the removal of Epiphanes (B.C. 164) improve the condition of affairs in Syria. The throne fell to his son, Antiochus V. Eupator, a boy of nine according to one authority, or according to another of twelve years of age. The regent, Lysias, exercised the chief power and was soon engaged in a war with the Jews, whom the death of the oppressor had encouraged to fresh efforts. The authority of Lysias was further disputed by a certain Philip whom Epiphanes shortly before his death had made tutor to the young monarch. The claim of this tutor to the regent's office being supported by a considerable portion of the army, a civil war arose between him and Lysias, which raged for the greater part of two years, terminating in the defeat and death of Philip (B.C. 162). But Syrian affairs did not even then settle down into tranquility. A prince of the Seleucid house, Demetrius by name, the son of Seleucus IV., and consequently the first cousin of Eupator, was at this time detained in Rome as a hostage, having been sent there during his father's lifetime as a security for his fidelity. Demetrius, with some reason, regarded

his claim to the Syrian throne was better than that of his cousin, who was the son of the younger brother, and, being in the first year of early youth, he determined to assert his pretensions in Syria, and to make a bold stroke for the crown. Having tried to obtain the Senate's consent to his quitting Italy, he took his departure secretly, crossed the Mediterranean in a Carthaginian vessel, and landing in Asia succeeded within a few months in establishing himself as Syrian monarch.

From this review of the condition of affairs in the Syrian and Bactrian kingdoms during the first half of the second century before Christ it is sufficiently apparent, that in both countries the state of things was favourable to any aspirations which the power that lay between them might entertain after dominion and self-aggrandisement. The kings of the two countries indeed at the time of the accession of Mithridates to the Parthian throne (c. 174) were, both of them, energetic and able princes, but the Syrian monarch was involved in difficulties at home which required all his attention, while the Bactrian was engaged in enterprises abroad which equally engrossed and occupied him. Mithridates might have attacked either with a good prospect of success. Personally he was at least their equal, and though numerically inferior to military strength and resources he possessed the great advantage of Iran, a perfectly free choice both of time and place, could seize the most unguarded moment, and make his attack on the quarter where he knew that he would be least expected and least ready to find resistance.

on the alert. Circumstances of which we now cannot appreciate the force seem to have determined him to direct his first attack against the territories of his eastern neighbour, the Bactrian king, Eucratidas. These, as we have seen, were left comparatively unguarded, while their ambitious master threw all his strength into his Indian wars, pressing through Cabulistan into the Punjab region and seeking to extend his dominion to the Sutlej river, or even to the Ganges. Naturally Mithradates was successful. Attacking the Bactrian territory where it adjoined Parthia he made himself master, without much difficulty, of two provinces—those of Turiûa and of Aspionus. Turiûa recalls the great but vague name of "Turanian," which certainly belongs to these parts, but can scarcely be regarded as local. Aspionus has been regarded as the district of the Apasiacæ, but the two words bear little comparison. It is best to be content with saying that we cannot locate the districts conquered but that they should be looked for in the district of the Tejend and Heri-rud, between the Paropamisus and the great city of Balkh.

It does not appear that Eucratidas attempted any retaliation. Absorbed in his schemes of Indian conquest, he let his home provinces go and sought compensation for them only in the far East. Meantime Mithradates, having been successful in his Bactrian aggression, and thus whetted his appetite for territorial gain, determined on a more important expedition. After waiting for a few years, until Eucratides was dead, and the Syrian throne occupied by the boy king Eupator while the two

claimants of the regency, Lysias and Philip were contending in arms for the supreme power he suddenly marched with a large force towards the West and fell upon the great province of Media Magna which, though still nominally a Syrian dependency was under the rule of a king and practically, if not legally, independent. Media was a most extensive and powerful country. Polybius calls it "the most powerful of all the kingdoms of Asia, whether we consider the extent of the territory or the number and quality of the men, or the goodness of the horses produced there. For these animals," he says, "are found in it in such abundance, that almost all the rest of Asia is supplied with them from this province." It is here also that the Royal horses are chosen on account of the excellence of the pasture. The capital of the province was now, as in the more ancient times, Ecbatana, situated on the acclivity of Mount Orontes. It was and, though fallen from its former grandeur, yet still a place of much importance, second only in all Western Asia to Antioch and perhaps Babylon. The invasion of Mithridates was stoutly resisted by the Medes, and several battles were fought, in which sometimes one and sometimes the other side had the advantage, but eventually the Parthians prevailed. Mithridates seized and occupied Ecbatana, which was at the time an unwalled town, established his authority over the whole region, and finally placed it under the government of a Parthian satrap. Recalled while he himself returned home, to crush a revolt which had broken out.

The scene of the revolt was Hyrcania. The Hyrcanian people, one markedly Arian had probably from the time of their subjugation chafed under the Parthian yoke and seeing in the absence of Mithridates with almost the whole of his power, in Media a tempting opportunity, had resolved to make a bold struggle for freedom before the further growth of Parthia should render such an attempt hopeless. We are not told that they had any special grievances, but they were brave and high-spirited they had enjoyed exceptional privileges under the Persians and no doubt they found the rule of a Turanian people galling and oppressive. They may well have expected to receive support and assistance from the other Arian nations in their neighbourhood as the Medes the Sagartians, the Arians on the Herirud, &c., and they may have thought that Mithridates would be too fully occupied with his Median struggle to have leisure to direct his arms against them. But the event showed that they had miscalculated. Media submitted to Mithridates without any very protracted resistance the Parthian monarch knew the value of time and, pushing Media matched upon Hyrcania without losing a moment, the other Arian tribes of the vicinity were either apathetic or timid, and did not stir a step for their relief. The insurrection was crushed in the bud, Hyrcania was forced to submit and became for centuries the obedient vassal of her powerful neighbour.

The conquest of Media had brought the Parthians into contact with the important country of Susiana or Elymais, the ancient seat of power, and one which had

flourished much during the whole of the Persian period, having contained within it the principal Persian capital, Susa. This tract possessed strong attractions for a conqueror, and it appears to have been not very long after he had succeeded in crushing the Hyrcanian revolt that Mithridates once more turned his arms westward, and from the new dangerous position which he held in Media directed an attack upon the rich and flourishing province which lay to the south. It would seem that Elymais, like Media, though reckoned a dependency of the Seleucid Empire, had a king of its own who was entrusted with its government and defence, and expected to hold his own battles. At any rate we do not hear of any aid being rendered to the Elymæans in this war, or of Mithridates having any other enemy to meet in the course of it besides "the Elymæan king." Less mindful he behaved without cruelty and, having overrun his country, apparently in a single campaign annexed the entire territory to his dominions.

Elymais was interposed between two regions of first-rate importance, Babylonia and Persia. Its thorough mastery of any one of the three, commonly carried with it on most occasions command over the other two. So far as can be gathered from the scanty materials which we possess for Parthian history at this period, the conquest of Elymais was followed almost immediately by the submission of Babylonia and Persia to the conqueror. Media had Elymais been forced to submit, the great Mithridates was very shortly a name object as their

sovereignty by all the countries that intervened between the Propontis and the Lower Euphrates.

Thus gloriously successful on this quarter Mithridates, who may fairly be considered the greatest monarch of his race, after leaving a few years to repose, began to think that the time was come for some more embracing enterprise of aggression, and seeking a similar extension of his dominion towards the East to that which he had found it so easy to effect in the regions of the West. The Bactrian troubles had increased. Eucratides, after greatly straining the resources of Bactria in his Indian war, had been waylaid and murdered on his return from one of them by his son Heliocles, who chose to celebrate his public enemy's death by driving his chariot over his corpse and ordered it to be left unburied. This unfilial wrong naturally met an unfortunate return. Attacked by Scythians from the north by Indians and Sogdians on the east and the south-east Heliocles had already more on his hands than he could conveniently manage when Mithridates declared war against him and invaded his country about B.C. 150. Already exhausted by his other wars, Heliocles could bear up no longer. Mithridates rapidly overran his dominions and took possession of the greater part of them. According to some he did not stop there, but pressing still further eastward marched into India and carried his arms over the Paropamisus to the banks of the Hydaspes. But this last advance, if it ever took place, was a raid rather than an attempt at conquest. It had no serious results. Long before it Mithridates had found it needful to return to Pontus, where he arrived in the

quarter was finally swept away by the Yuechi and other Scythic tribes. The Parthian Empire now included any portion of the Indus region, its furthest provinces towards the east being Bactria, Aria, Sarangia, Arachosia and Susiana.

The great increase of power which Mithridates had brought by his conquests could not be a matter of indifference to the Syrian monarchs. But their domestic troubles—the contentions between Philip and Lysias between Lysias and Demetrius Soter, Soter and Alexander Balas, Balas and Demetrius II, Demetrius II and Tryphon—had so occupied them for twenty years from 162 to 142 B.C., that they had felt it impossible, or hopeless, to attempt any expedition towards the East, for the protection or recovery of their provinces. Mithridates had been allowed to pursue his career of conquest unopposed, so far as the Syrians were concerned, and to establish his sway from the Hindu Kush to the Euphrates. A time however, at last came when home dangers were less absorbing, and a prospect of engaging the terrible Parthians with success seemed to present itself. The second Demetrius had not, indeed, altogether overcome his domestic enemy, Tryphon, but he had so far brought him into difficulties as to believe that he might safely be absent for at least a year with his wife, Cleopatra, and his captains. At the same time, the condition of affairs in the East seemed to invite his interference. Mithridates ruled his new conquests with some strictness, probably suspecting their fidelity and determined that he would not by any remissness allow them to escape from his grasp.

The native inhabitants could scarcely be much attached to the Syro Macedonians who had certainly not treated them with much tenderness but a possession of one hundred and ninety years duration confers prestige in the East, and a strange yoke may have galled more than one to whose pressure they had become accustomed. Moreover, all the provinces which the Parthians had taken from Syria contained Greek towns, and their inhabitants might at all times be depended upon to side with their countrymen against the Asiatics. At the present conjuncture, too, the number of the malcontents was swelled by the addition of the recently subdued Bactrians, who hated the Parthian yoke and longed for an opportunity of recovering their freedom.

Thus, when Demetrius II., anxious to escape the reproach of rashness, determined to make a great expedition upon the formidable Parthian monarch, who ruled over all the countries between the Paropamisus and the Lower Euphrates he found himself welcomed as a deliverer by a considerable number of his enemy's subjects, whom the harshness or the novelty of the Parthian rule had offended. The malcontents joined his standard as he advanced, and supported as he thus was, by Persian, Elymæan, and Bactrian contingents, he engaged and defeated the Parthians in several battles. Mithridates at last, recognising his inferiority in military strength, determined to have recourse to stratagem, and having put Demetrius off his guard by proposals of peace made a sudden attack upon him completely defeated his army, and took him prisoner. The conquered monarch was at

first treated with some harshness, being conveyed about to the several nations which had revolted and paraded before each in turn to shew them how foolish they had been in coming with their aid, but when this purpose had been answered, Mithridates showed himself magnanimous gave his royal captive the honours befitting his rank assigned him a residence in Hyrcania and even gave him the hand of his daughter, Rhodogune, in marriage. It was policy, however, still more than clemency which dictated this conduct. Mithridates ventures, designs against the Syrian kingdom itself, and saw that it would be for his advantage to have a Syrian prince in his camp allied to him by marriage, who should put forward as entitled to the throne and whom, if his enterprise succeeded, he might have to govern Syria for him, as tributary monarch. These far-reaching plans might perhaps have been crowned with success, had the head which conceived them been spared to watch over and direct the execution. But Providence decreed otherwise. Mithridates had reached an advanced age, and, being attacked by illness soon after his capture of Demetrius, found his strength unequal to battle with his malady, and to the great grief of his subjects succumbed to it (B.C. 136) after an eventful and glorious reign of **thirty eight years.**

V.

GOVERNMENTAL SYSTEM OF MITHRIDATES I.—LAWS AND INSTITUTIONS.

THE Parthian institutions no doubt their roots in that early condition of society among the inhabitants of the Caspian region, which belongs to the twilight, rather than to the dawn of history, and which has to be conjectured or divined rather than worked out from the statements of ancient writers. From time immemorial this region has been mainly occupied by nomadic tribes, for whom alone it is fitted, and has accordingly called up among a number of races more or less closely allied are generally very similar in character. Constant wars and rapid occupy successes. Every man has to be a warrior, and there can be but little war marks out a comparatively few for orders the many for mere servitude. Hence something like a feudal organization naturally prevails. The leader in war is the chieftain or noble in peace. An aristocracy forms itself around which the "citizens" or "serfs" are grouped. When, in course of time, some specially serious war threatens, or some enterprise is taken in hand of more than usual magnitude and gravity, the need of a directing hand

is felt—the confederacy of chiefs recognises the weakness of a confederacy, and by common consent a single man, famous or selected as King, Great Khan, Dictator, Governor, Commander-in-chief. Thus, in such a state of society as has been described, monarchy makes its appearance. The fittest to command and direct is placed at the head of affairs, given some title or other implying authority, and accepted by the general body of chiefs as their sovereign.

But in conferring this authority to the necessities of the case, the chiefs are careful to reserve to themselves considerable powers, and the result is thus a limited monarchy. In Parthia, the king was permanently assisted by two councils, consisting of persons not of the royal nomination, whom rights, conferred by birth or office, entitled to their high positions. One of these was a family conclave, *concilium domesticum*, or assembly of full-grown males of the Royal House, the other was a Senate comprising both the spiritual and the temporal chiefs of the nation the "Sophi," or "Wise Men," and the "Magi" or "Priests." Together these two bodies constituted the Megistanes, the "Nobles," or "Great Men"—the privileged class which to a considerable extent, checked and controlled the monarch. The monarchy was elective, but only in the house of the Arsacidæ, and the concurrent vote of both councils was necessary to the election of a new king. Practically, the ordinary law of hereditary descent appears to have been commonly followed, unless in the case where a king left no son of sufficient age to exercise

the royal office. Under such circumstances, the Magistrates usually nominated the late king's next brother to succeed him, or if he had left no brother, went back to an uncle. When the case of succession had once been changed, the right of the elder branch was lost, and did not revive unless the branch preferred had died or possessed no member qualified to rule. When a king had been duly nominated by the two councils, the right of placing the crown upon his head belonged to the Senate, the "Field-Marshal" or "Commander-in-chief of the Parthian armies." The Magistrates further claimed and sometimes exercised the right of deposing a monarch whose conduct displeased or disturbed them; but an attempt to exercise this privilege naturally, and almost necessarily led to a civil war, since no monarch was likely to accept his deposition without a struggle, and thus it was force and not right which practically determined whether a deposed king should lose his crown or no.

After a monarch had been once elected and firmly seated upon the throne the power which he wielded appears to have been very nearly despotic. At any rate, he could put to death without a trial whomsoever he chose, and adult members of the Royal House, who ventured to provoke the reigning monarch's jealousy were constantly so treated. But probably it would have been more easy to arouse the fears of the "Sophi" or "Mag." The latter especially were a powerful body, consisting of an organized hierarchy which had come down from ancient times and was feared and venerated by all

classes of the people. Their nominees at the court of the empire seeking adult princes usually are nominated at eighty to one vote, they possessed considerable power of their own, and were the sole inhabitants of many large towns or villages which they were permitted to govern as seemed good to them. The arbitrary power of the monarchs must, in practice, have been largely checked by the privileges of this numerous priesthood, which it would seem that, in the later times, has become jealous, thereby preparing the way for their own downfall.

The dominion of the Parthians over the provinces, which Mithridates had earlier brought into conquest, was maintained by reverting to the system which had prevailed generally throughout the East before the accession of the Achæmenian Persians to power, and which is the simplest and most natural of all possible empire organizations. This was the system of establishing, in the various countries called provinces, ruling governorships, or else dependent dynasties of kings. In either case, the rulers, kings as they paid their tribute regularly to the Parthian monarchs and furnished the contingents to armies of them for the wars in which Parthia was almost always engaged, were allowed to govern the people under them as they at their pleasure. Among monarchs, in the higher sense of the term, who were nominally vassals to Parthia may be enumerated the kings of Persia, Elymais, Characene, Osroene, and of Armenia and Media Atropatene, which they formed as they sometimes for portions of the Parthian Empire. The viceroys, who governed the other provinces, bore the

title of Vitava, or Vassals, and were fourteen or fifteen in number. The remark has been made by perhaps the greatest of Persian historians (Gibbon) that the system thus established exhibited many of the features and was the image of the feudal system which has since prevailed in Europe. The comparison is of some value, as pointing out circumstances which might otherwise have been overlooked, but like most historical parallels it is incorrect. The points of difference between the Parthian and the feudal systems were probably more numerous than the points of resemblance; but the points of resemblance being very many and very striking. It was with special reference to the system thus established that the Parthian monarchs took the title of "King of kings" ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΝ so frequent upon their coins, a title which was not in one instance only, but "Satrap of Satraps" ΣΑΤΡΑΠΗΣ ΤΩΝ ΣΑΤΡΑΠΩΝ. The title "King of kings" notoriously appears first on the coins of Mithridates.

In the Parthian system there was one anomaly of a very curious character. The Greek cities which were scattered in large numbers throughout the empire, foundations of Alexander or his successors, had yet a municipal government of their own, and in some cases were almost independent communities, the Parthian kings exercising over them little or no control. The great city of Seleucia upon the Tigris was the most important of these places; its population was estimated in the first century after Christ at six hundred thousand souls; it had strong walls, and was surrounded by a most fertile territory. Its

[illegible] council of three hundred members, elected by the [illegible] over them, from among the wealthiest and best connected of the citizens. Under ordinary circumstances it enjoyed the blessing of complete self-government and was entirely free from [illegible] paying no tribute to appear at Susa but [illegible] the position of a "free city." It was only in the case of internal disturbances that these advantages were lost, and the Parthian soldiers invaded within the walls, arrested the [illegible] and established the constitution of the State at the point of the sword. Such, however, though probably less extreme, in principle, would seem to have been the case with most of the other Greek cities, at least [illegible] within the empire. The Parthian monarchs taught it prudent to [illegible], and their practice in this respect [illegible] the title of Philhellene" which they were fond of assuming upon their coins. On the whole, the policy may have been wise; but it diminished the unity of the empire, and there were times when serious danger arose from it. The Syro-Macedonian monarchs could always count with certainty on having powerful friends in Hellas [illegible] to make their [illegible] what-ever portion of it they invaded; and even the Jews, though their ethnic connection with the Greeks was not so close, were sometimes appealed to them for aid of an important kind.

Another enemy of a similar character, but of less importance since the number of persons which it affected cannot have been nearly so great, was the

position occupied by the Jewish communities within the Parthian state. These, though far less numerous than the Grecian, were still not infrequent, and their location in some of the most considerable cities of the empire gave them a consequence which makes it necessary that they should not be overlooked. In Babylon, in Seleucia, in Ctesiphon, and in other principal towns, as Susa probably and Khages, there was so large a Jewish element in the population, that it had been thought best to give them municipal independence the power to elect magistrates and perhaps a special quarter in each town to dwell in. There were also a certain number of places the inhabitants of which were wholly Jews, and these enjoyed similar privileges with the "free towns" of the Greeks. Hence another element of weakness in the organization of the empire, wherein an amalgamation of races, or even a thorough fusion, was impossible. The worst results showed themselves in the towns with mixed populations, where, from time to time, the most fearful disturbances broke out often terminating in horrible massacres.

A Greek writer of the Augustan age tells us, that the Great Mithridates, after effecting his conquests, made a collection of the best laws which he found to prevail among the various subject peoples, and imposed them on the Parthian nation. This statement is, no doubt, an exaggeration; but we may attribute to Mithridates with some reason the introduction at this time of various practices and usages, whereby the Parthian Court was assimilated to those of the earlier Great Monarchies of Asia, and became

in the eyes of foreigners the successor and representative of the old Assyrian and Persian kings. To assume imperial titles, and of a new style the organization, but not a new myth, bestowed of a new character on the subordinate officers of the empire were suitable to the new phase of its history. The old myth was not entirely laid, new interest and many of its highest probably, but not with absolute certainty, be assigned to this period.

It has been always noticed that Mithridates I appears to have been the last Parthian sovereign who had the sole title of King of Kings. The title had been a favourite one with the old Assyrian and Persian monarchs but was not adopted either by the Seleucidæ or by the Greek kings of Bactria. Its revival implied a claim to that mastery of Western Asia which had belonged first to the Assyrians and Persians, and which was, in later times, formally claimed by Artaxerxes, the founder of the New Persian Kingdom. Previous Parthian monarchs had been content to call themselves "Arsaces the King," or "the Great King." Mithridates I is "the King of Kings the great and illustrious Arsaces" — ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΝ ΜΕΓΑΛΟΥ ΑΡΣΑΚΟΥ ΕΠΙΦΑΝΟΥΣ.

On the same coins Mithridates appears to have adopted the tiara or high crown which, with certain modifications in its shape, had been the mark of sovereignty, both under the Assyrians and under the Persians. Previously the royal headdress had been either a simple cap of a Scythic type pointed, but lower than the tiara, the usually worn by the ordinary

diadem, which was a band encircling the head and terminating in two long ribbons or ends that hung down behind the head on the back. According to Herodotus, the diadem, in the later times, was purple, but the coins of Parthia do not exhibit this peculiarity. The cap of the first king is ornamented with pendant pearls in front, the stiff tiara of Mithridates has three rows of pearls sewn on to it.

Ammianus Marcellinus tells us that among the titles assumed by the Parthian monarchs was that of Brother of the Sun and Moon. The Shahs of modern Persia still claim the epithet. It is ordinarily used not so much by them as by their courtiers and employés in the language of compliment, and this may have been to some extent the case in Parthian times. There is reason to believe that in the minds of many at the time, such things had a higher character than is regarded as attaching to the Arsacid coins. In the representations, which form so marked a feature of the later Parthian combatants abstained from using their bows except on horseback, and were looked upon as a servile race. The title *Theos*, "God," was even assumed as a title by at least one of the kings, and a favourite epithet upon the coins is *Dikaiotatos*, which implies the divinity of the king's father. After his death the monarch seems generally to have been the object of a regular worship, statues were erected to him in temples where they were apparently associated with the images of the Sun-God and the Moon-God.

No account of the Parthian court has come down

to us that is either complete or altogether trustworthy, but some particulars may be gathered about it from the scattered notices of various ancient writers on whom we may place reliance. The best authorities are agreed that it was not stationary, but migrated at different times of the year to different cities of the empire, in this respect resembling the Court of the Achæmenidæ. It is not quite clear, however, which of the cities were thus favoured. Ctesiphon was undoubtedly one of them. All writers agree that it was the chief city of the empire and the ordinary seat of the government. Dion, according to Strabo, thus surpassed the wonders of the daughter, in the excellence of the art. The town was situated on the left bank of the Tigris, opposite to Seleucia, twelve or thirteen miles below the modern Baghdad. Pliny says that it was built by the Parthians in order to reduce Seleucia to insignificance, and that when it failed of its purpose it was built another city, Vologesocerta, in the same neighbourhood with the same object; but the account of Strabo is more probable—namely, that it grew up naturally out of the wish of the Parthian kings to quit Seleucia, the capital not of Parthia, the state which they subverted, the Court from habit to place a natural upon them. The remainder of the year, according to the same authority, was spent by the Parthian monarchs either at the Median city of Ecbatana, which is the modern Hamadan, or in the province of Hyrcania. In Hyrcania the palace, Strabo says, was at Lapæ, and between this place and Ecbatana he appears to have regarded the monarchs as spending the whole time

which was not passed at Ctesiphon. Athenæus however declares that Rhages, near the Caspian Gates, was the spring residence of the Parthian kings, and it seems not unlikely that this famous city, which Isidore of Charax, writing in Parthian times, calls "the greatest in Media" was among the occasional residences of the Court. Parthia itself was, it would seem, deserted, but still a city of that region preserved in one respect a royal character, being the place where all the earlier monarchs were interred. Ultimately Arsacia became the royal burying place.

The pomp and grandeur of the Parthian kings are described only in the vaguest terms by the Greek and Roman writers. No author of repute, whose remains have come down to us appears to have visited the Parthian Court. We may perhaps best learn a correct notion of the splendour of the sovereign from the accounts which have reached us of his relations and great officers, who can have reflected only faintly the magnificence of the sovereign. Plutarch tells us that the general who on Orodes' behalf to conduct the war against Crassus came into the field accompanied by two hundred litters wherein were carried his concubines, and by a thousand camels which carried his baggage. His dress was the long flowing robe of the ancient Medes; he wore his hair parted down the middle, and had his face painted with cosmetics. A body of ten thousand horse composed entirely of his guards and slaves followed him to battle. We may conclude from this picture, and from the general tenor of the classical notices, that the Arsacidæ revelled and entertained very much after the Court as

that of the old Achæmenian princes, having probably [illegible] their models in point of luxury and refinement, but exceeding it in luxury to extravagance, expensiveness and barbarism. Moreover in one respect, no advance was made beyond the habits of Achæmenian civilisation. The dramatic representations introduced into Asia by the Greeks proved extraordinarily attractive to the semi-barbarous race, unaccompanied however with any such refinements. The Greek language and literature were so far studied as to render the representation of Greek dramas intelligible to the upper classes. At Pontic cities there was a regular theatre flourished at Sinope under the royal patronage, the satyr-dances of the most graceful of Bacchanalian revels were too closely interwoven with the forms of the Greek drama not to follow in its train. The Court of Sinope presented a motley combination of the manners of different ages and countries, only to be paralleled perhaps, in the semi-European fashions of St. Petersburg and Moscow.

But it, at their Court the Parthian vices were thus tolerated or even encouraged, luxurious habits and sensual enjoyments among the bulk of the nation were very opposite characteristics prevailed. The hardy Scythian virtues always continued with the Parthian people. They had always been known as Strabo notes, much that was barbarous and Scythic. The organisation of their army was very rude. Each chieftain brought into the field, like the barons of the Middle Ages an undisciplined and probably uncounted contingent of retainers, armed as their means allowed

[illegible]

them some, the richest in coats of mail or chain armour and mounted on steeds entirely protected, carrying, besides the universal bow and arrows, a long spear or pike; others lightly equipped, without armour and carrying nothing but a bow and arrows, with a short sword or mace. Of these last, a portion only were mounted, while the remainder served on foot. When the contingents were raised, the troops were simply massed together according to their character into three bodies—the heavy cavalry, the light cavalry and the foot. There were no divisions corresponding to the Roman legions, or our regiments, and, apparently, no petty officers, each contingent simply obeying its chief. When the king went out to battle with his army the king was, of course, Commander-in-chief. In his absence his place was taken by a Surena, or field marshal appointed by him to the command. There was, however, a chief Surena whose office was hereditary, and who, besides commanding in the field, was a great State official.

Such seems to have been the general character of those practices and institutions which distinguished the Parthians from the Romans of the conquests of Mithridates. Some of them, it is probable, they rather adopted than invented, but there is no good reason for doubting that of many of them they were the originators. He appears to have been one of those rare men who, to whatever they have been given to excel as powers and capacities which form the connecting link with those which constitute the successful organiser of a State. Brave and enterprising in war, prompt to seize an occasion, yet knowing how to wait for the best

VI

LAST STRUGGLE WITH SYRIA—DEFEAT AND DEATH OF ANTIOCHUS SIDETES

THE death of Mithridates and the accession of a comparatively uninterposing successor, Phraates II encouraged Syria to make one more effort to thrust the Parthians back into their native wilds, and to recover the dominion of Western Asia. So great a position was not a thing to be surrendered without

COIN OF PHRAATES II.

a final effort. It was a desperate struggle, and in the actual position of affairs it was quite open to question whether, on the whole, Parthia or Syria were the stronger. The dynasties of both countries was comparatively recent, neither had any firm hold on its outlying provinces, neither could claim to

have contributed to the [illegible] of the Western Asiatic generals, or to put its [illegible] on a broader basis than that of military force. And in military force it was uncertain which way the balance inclined. Both countries had a nucleus of native troops, on which absolute reliance might be placed, which was brave, faithful, staunch, and would contend to the death for their respective sovereigns. But beyond this, in both lay a fluctuating body of unwarlike subjects or subject-states, unworthy of implicit trust, and likely to gravitate towards one side or the other according as hope, or fear, or the most capricious might dictate. The chances of victory or defeat turned mainly on this fluctuating body, the instability of which had been amply proved in the wars of the last century. These wars themselves, taken as a whole, had made for no decided preponderance of either people over the other; at one time Parthia, at another Syria, had been the pressed, and it was natural for the depressed either side to believe that accidental circumstances rather than any marked superiority in one of the two peoples over the other, had caused them the results that had been realized.

In the last war but two Parthia had successfully contended with Pacorus. An entire army had been destroyed, and the Syrian monarch captured. Demetrius the Conqueror, as he called himself, was expiating on the cold and rainy slopes of Hyrcania the rash act which had led him to declare himself a match for the craft and strategy of Mithridates. But now a new and untried monarch was on the

Demetrius, who was clearly without his father's talents, but probably somewhat [illegible] settled in his kingdom for the space of six years he had not only attempted nothing against Syria but had thought it no military enterprise whatever. Yet the condition of Syria had been such as to offer the strongest possible temptation to a neighbour possessed of courage and energy. Civil war had raged, and exhausted the resources of the country, from [illegible] to 134, after which there had been a protracted struggle between the Syrians and the Jews from 137 to 133, in which the Syrian arms had at first been victorious, but had at length asserted their superiority. If Phraates II., the son and successor of Mithridates, inherited a tenth part of his father's military spirit, he would have taken advantage of this trouble in time to carry the war into Syria Proper, and might have seated the Syrian throne by the side of his own upon the Euphrates. In the person of the captive Demetrius, he possessed one whom he might have set up as a pretender with a certainty of drawing many Syrians to his side, and whom he might, if successful, have left to rule as Vitassa, or subject king, over the country of which he had once been actual monarch. But Phraates had no great talent for enterprise. He let all the opportunities which offered themselves escape him, content to keep Demetrius—when he escaped from confinement, to pursue and retake him—and to hold him in reserve as a piece of which he might one day make use, without seeming to him that the fitting time was come for it.

The result of his being proclaimed was, that the east was roused and recovered from the other side. Antiochus Sidetes, who had succeeded to the Syrian throne on the overthrow of his brother, Demetrius, and had taken to wife his brother's widow, Cleopatra, having enticed the pretender Tryphon, with her assistance, was beset with some difficulty on his accession on the Jews refusing him tribute. Desirous to resume the struggle with Parthia, and having made great preparations, set out for the East with the full intention of conquering, his brother, and recovering his lost provinces.

It is supposed by some without considerable reserve the numbers that have come down to us of the force with Antiochus crossed. According to Justin it consisted of no less than eighty thousand fighting men, to whom were attached the incredible number of three hundred thousand camp followers, the mere mention of their consisting of cooks, bakers, and actors! In other extreme cases the camp-followers do but equal, or at most exceed the number of men fit for active service, the estimate which makes them nearly four times as many is entitled to little credit. The late historian Grote, corrects the error here mentioned, but his account seems to err on the opposite quarter. According to him the armed host amounted to three hundred thousand men, while the camp-followers, grooms, waiters, cooks, and actors were to them in a third of the number. From these accounts taken rather at random perhaps it is safest to conclude that the entire host did not fall much short of four hundred thousand

men. This estimate receives a certain amount of confirmation from an independent statement made incidentally by Diodorus with respect to the number of the Syrian soldiers that fell in the campaign, which he estimates at three hundred thousand.

The army of Phraates according to two concurrent accounts numbered no more than a hundred and twenty thousand. An attempt which he made to obtain help from a horde of Scythian mercenaries from the regions beyond the Oxus failed, the Scythians being quite willing to accept his money, but arriving too late to be of any use. At the same time a defection on the part of the subject princes enfeebled the Parthian monarch of contingents which would have swelled his numbers; and thus, upon the subject of his own countrymen chiefly or solely, under these circumstances it is more surprising that he was able to collect a hundred and twenty thousand men than that he was not successful in bringing into the field a larger number.

The Syrian troops were magnificently appointed. The common soldiers had their military boots fastened with buckles or studs of gold, and the ordinary utensils, in which the food of the army was cooked, were in many instances of silver. It seemed as if banqueting rather than fighting was to be the order of the day. But to suppose that this was actually so would be to do the army of Antiochus an injustice. History, from the time of Sardanapalus to that of the Crimean War of 1854–6, abounds with instances of the strangest combination of luxury and habits with valour of the highest

and Nothing of importance can be established against the Syrian scribes who, on the contrary, seem to have played a great part in the composition of the Old Testament. They were accompanied by a body of Jews under John Hyrcanus the son of Simon and grandson of the first Maccabee leader who had been forced to take up temporarily the position of a Syrian feudatory. As they advanced through the Mesopotamian regions after crossing the Euphrates, they received continuous fresh accessions of strength by the arrival of contingents from the Parthian tributary states, which, impatient with Parthian oppression and careless or perhaps attracted by Syrian luxury and magnificence, embraced the cause of the invader.

Phraates, on his part, instead of awaiting attack in the fastnesses of Parthia or Hyrcania, elected to meet his enemy across the Assyrian and Babylonian plains, and either in person or by his generals engaged the Syrian invaders in three pitched battles, in each of which he was defeated. One of these was fought upon the banks of the Greater Zab or Lycus river, not far from the site of Arbela, where Antiochus met and defeated the Parthian general Indates, and routed a Turanian horde of heavy cavalry. The exact scene of the other two encounters is not known to us, and in no case have we any description of the battles, so that we have no means of judging whether it was by superiority of force or of strategy that the Syrian monarch, thus far prevailed, and attained almost the whole for which he was fighting. The entire province of Babylonia to the Euphrates, the entire empire, where were situated the three great cities of

Babylon, Seleucia, and Cœle-Syria fell into his hands, and a further defection of the tributary countries from the Parthian cause took place. A defection so widespread, that the writer who records it says with a certain amount of rhetoric no doubt—"Phraates had now nothing left to him beyond the limits of the original Parthian territory." He maintained however a position somewhere in the Lower Euphrates region, and still confronted Antiochus with an army which, though beaten, was bent on resistance.

When affairs were in this state, Phraates, recognising the peril of his position, came to the conclusion that it was necessary to attempt, at any rate, a diversion. He had still what seemed to him a winning card in his hand, and it was time to play it. Demetrius, the brother of Antiochus, and *hence* the king of Syria, was still in his possession, watched and carefully guarded in the rough Hyrcanian home, from which he had twice escaped, but easy to be recaptured. He would send Demetrius into Syria under an escort of Parthian troops, who should conduct him to the frontier and give him the opportunity of recovering his own throne. It would be strange if one, entitled to the throne by his birth, and its actual occupant for the space of six years, could not rally to himself a party in a country always ready to welcome pretenders, and to accept as valid claims that were utterly baseless. Let troubles break out in the rear of his rival's march over Syria, let Syria itself and Antiochus's throne be threatened, and Antiochus would, he thought, either recall his army, or, at the least, be greatly alarmed, have his attention distracted from his aggressive enterprise, and be afraid of plunging

[illegible] after Antiochus, on crossing at the shadow of [illegible] the subject

[illegible] with his Parthian escort set out but the [illegible] to be traversed was great and travelling [illegible] in Asia. Moreover, the winter time was [illegible] and each week would increase the difficulties [illegible]. The scheme of Phraates hung fire. No immediate effect followed from it. Antiochus may not have received intelligence of the impending danger, or he may have thought his wife Cleopatra [illegible] he had left at Artioch, capable of coping with it. In any case it is certain that his movements were in no way affected by the halt which Phraates had hastened at home. Instead of withdrawing his troops from the occupied provinces and marching them back into Syria, thus relinquishing all that he had gained by his successful campaign, he resolved to maintain all the conquests that he had made, and to keep his troops where they were, merely dividing them on account of their numbers, among the various cities which he had taken, and making them go into winter quarters. His design was carried out, the army was dispersed, and for the present [illegible] somewhat relaxed, and the soldiery, having no military duties to perform, amused themselves, as foreign soldiers are apt to do, by heavy requisitions, and by cruel treatment of the native inhabitants.

Some months of the winter passed in this way. Gradually the discontent of the civil populations in the cities increased. Representations were made to Phraates by secret messages, that the yoke of the Syrians was found to be intolerable, and that, if he

would give the signal the cities were ripe for revolt. Much had been negotiation must have taken place before a complete arrangement could have been made, or a fixed plan settled on. As in the "Saint Bartholomew," as in the "Sicilian Vespers," as in the great outbreak against the Roman power in Asia Minor under Mithridates of Pontus, the secret must have been communicated to hundreds, who with a marvellous tenacity of purpose, kept it inviolate for weeks or months, so that not a whisper reached the ears of the victims. Sunk in a delusive dream of the most absolute security, careless of the feelings, and deaf to the grumblings of the townsmen, the Syrian rulers continued to enjoy their long and pleasant holiday, without a suspicion of the danger that was impending. Meanwhile Phraates arranged all the details of his plan, and communicated them to his confederates. It was agreed that on an appointed day all the cities should break out in revolt: the natives should take arms, rise against the soldiers quartered upon them, and slay all or as many as possible. Phraates promised to be at hand with his army, to prevent the scattered garrisons from giving help to each other. It was calculated that, in this way, the invaders might be cut off almost to a man without the trouble of even fighting a battle.

But before he proceeded to these fearful extremities, the Parthian prince, touched perhaps with compassion, determined to give his adversary a chance of escaping the fate prepared for him by these concessions. The winter was not over. Yet the snow was beginning to melt through the increasing warmth of

the stars rave and the day appointed for the general rising was evidently drawing near. Phraates felt that no time was to be lost. Accordingly he sent ambassadors to Antiochus to propose peace and to inquire on what terms it would be granted him. The reply of Antiochus, according to Justinus, was as follows: "If Phraates would restore unto Demetrius, from captivity, and deliver him up without ransom, at the same time restoring all the provinces which had been taken by Parthian from Syria, and consenting to pay a tribute to Parthia itself, peace might be had, but not otherwise." In such terms it was, of course, impossible that any Parthian king should listen; and the ambassadors of Phraates returned, therefore, without further parley.

Soon afterwards the day appointed for the outbreak arrived. Apparently, even yet no suspicion had been excited. The Syrian troops were everywhere quietly enjoying themselves in their winter quarters, when, suddenly and without any warning, they found themselves attacked by the natives. Taken at disadvantage it was impossible for them to make a successful resistance, and it would seem that the great bulk of them were massacred in their quarters. Antiochus, and the detachment stationed with him alone so far as we know escaped. They even fought and contended for their lives in fast warfare. It had been the intention of the Syrian monarch, when he quitted his station, to hasten to the protection of the division quarters nearest to him, but he had no sooner commenced his march than he found himself confronted by Phraates, who was at the head of his main army,

having, no doubt, anticipated the design of Antiochus and resolved to frustrate it. The Parthian prince was anxious to engage at once, as his force far outnumbered that commanded by his adversary, but the latter might have declined the battle had he so willed, and have at any rate greatly protracted the struggle. He had a mountainous region—Mount Zagros, probably—within a short distance of him, and might have fallen back upon it, so leaving the Parthian horse at great disadvantage, but he was still at an age when caution is apt to be considered cowardice, and temerity to pass for true courage. Despite the advice of one of his captains, he determined to accept the battle which the enemy offered, and not to fly before a foe whom he had three times defeated. But the determination of the commander was ill seconded by the army which he commanded. Though Antiochus fought strenuously, he was defeated since his troops were without heart and offered but a poor resistance. At length the general who had advised retreat was the first to fly, and then the whole army broke up and dispersed itself. Antiochus himself perished either slain by the enemy or by his own hand. His son, Seleucus, and a niece, a daughter of his brother, Demetrius, who had accompanied him in his exile, also were captured. His troops were either cut to pieces or made prisoners. The entire number of those slain in the battle, and in the general massacre, was reckoned at three hundred thousand.

Such was the issue of this great expedition. It was the last which any Seleucid monarch undertook into these countries, the final attempt made by Syria to

repossess herself of her lost Eastern provinces. Henceforth, Parthia was no further troubled by the power that had hitherto been her most dangerous and formidable enemy, but was at liberty to enjoy, without molestation from Syria, the conquests which she had effected. Syria, in fact, had received so deep a wound, that she had from this time ceased to assert her own existence. The immediate result of the destruction of Antiochus and his host was the revolt of Judea, which henceforth maintained its independence, or terminable, to the time of the Romans. The dominions of the Seleucidæ were reduced to Cilicia and Syria Proper, or the tract west of the Euphrates between the chain of Amanus and Palestine. Internally the Syrian state was agitated by constant commotions from the claims of various pretenders to the sovereignty; externally, it was kept in continual alarm by the Egyptians, the Romans and the Armenians. During the sixty years that elapsed between the return of Demetrius to his kingdom (B.C. 125) and the conversion of Syria into a Roman province (B.C. 65) she ceased wholly to be formidable to her neighbours. Her flourishing period was gone by, and a rapid decline set in from which there was no recovery. It is surprising that the Romans did not step in earlier to terminate a race which was but a little removed from anarchy. Rome however had other work on her hands—civil troubles, social wars, and the struggle with Mithridates, and hence the Syrian state continued to exist till the year B.C. 65, though in a feeble and moribund condition.

In Parthia the discomfiture of Syria's defeat

and collapse were less important than might have been expected. One would naturally have looked to see, as the immediate result, a fresh development of the aggressive spirit and a burst of energy and enterprise parallel to that which had carried the arms of Mithridates I. from his Parthian fastnesses to the Hydaspes on the one hand and to the Euphrates on the other. But no such result followed. We hear indeed of Phraates *intending* to follow up his victory over Antiochus by a grand attack upon Syria—an attack to which, if it had taken place, she must almost certainly have succumbed—but, in point of fact, the relations between the two countries continued for many years after the Great Massacre, peaceful, if not even friendly. Phraates celebrated the obsequies of Antiochus with the pomp and ceremony befitting a powerful king, and ultimately placed his remains in a coffin of silver, and sent them into Syria, to find their last resting place in their native country. He treated Seleucus, the son of Antiochus, who had been made prisoner in the final battle, with the highest honour, and took to wife Antiochus's niece who fell into his hands at the same time. The rival houses of the Seleucidæ and the Arsacidæ became thus closely allied, and, all grounds for further hostilities having been removed, peace and amity were established between the former rivals. No doubt a powerful motive influencing Parthia in the adoption of this policy was that revelation of a new danger which will form the chief subject of the ensuing section.

VII.

PRESSURE OF THE NORTHERN NOMADS UPON PARTHIA.—SCYTHIC WARS OF PHRAATES II. AND ARTABANUS II.

THE Turanian or Tatar races by which Central and Northern Asia are inhabited, have at all times constituted a serious danger to the inhabitants of the softer South. Hordes of wild barbarians wander over those inhospitable regions, increase, multiply, exert a pressure on their southern neighbours, and are felt as a perpetual menace. Every now and then a crisis arrives. Population has increased beyond the means of subsistence, or a novel ambition has seized a tribe or a powerful chief, and the barrier which has hitherto proved a sufficient restraint, is forced. There is then suddenly cast off from the frozen bosom of the North a stream of coarse, brutish savages, brave, angry, countless—who swarm into the finer southern regions determinedly, irresistibly; like locusts winging their flight into a greener land. How such multitudes come to be propagated in countries where life is with difficulty sustained, we do not know, why the impulse suddenly seizes them to quit their old haunts and

move steadily in a given direction, we cannot say but we see that the great movement is one of constant recurrence and we have thus come to regard it as being scarcely curious or strange at all. In Asia, Cimmerians, Scythians, Cimbri, Mongols, Turks; in Europe, Gauls, Goths, Huns, Avars, Vandals, Burgundians, Lombards, Bulgarians, have successively illustrated the law and made us familiar with its operation. "Inroads of the northern barbarians" has become a common place with writers of history, and there is scarcely any country of the South, whether in Asia or in Europe, that has not experienced them.

Such inroads are very dreadful when they take place. Hordes of savages, coarse and repulsive in their appearance, fierce in their temper, rude in their habits, not perhaps individually very brave or strong but powerful by their numbers, and sometimes by a new mode of warfare which it is difficult to resist, pour into the seats of civilization, and spread havoc around. They come, as has been observed, like a flight of locusts, countless irresistible—finding the land before them a garden, and leaving it behind them a howling wilderness. Neither sex nor age is spared. The inhabitants of the open country and of the villages, if they do not make their escape to high mountain tops or other strongholds, are ruthlessly massacred by the invaders or, at best, forced to become their slaves. The crops are consumed, the flocks and herds swept off, or destroyed; the villages and homesteads burnt; the whole country made a scene of desolation. Walled towns perhaps resist

them as they have not often patience enough for sieges, but sometimes, with a dogged determination, they sit down before the ramparts, and by a prolonged blockade starve the defenders into submission. Then there ensues an indescribable scene of havoc, rapine and bloodshed. Many a city rich with the accumulated stores of ages are ransacked and perhaps burnt, priceless works of art often perish, cities whose growth has taken centuries to build up are trampled down. Few things are more terrible than the devastation and ruin which such an inroad has often spread over a fair and smiling kingdom, even when it has merely swept over it like a passing storm, and has led to no permanent occupation.

Against a danger of this kind the Parthian princes had had, almost from the first, to guard. They were themselves of the nomadic race. Iranians, if our hypothesis concerning them be sound, and had established their kingdom by an invasion of the type above described. But they had immediately become settlers, inhabitants of cities; they had been softened, to a certain extent, civilised, and now they looked on the nomadic hordes of the North with the same dislike and disgust with which the Persians and the Greco-Macedonians had formerly regarded them. In the Scythians of the Trans-Caspian tract they saw an unceasing peril, and one, moreover, which was, at the time of Pharates, continually increasing and becoming more and more threatening.

Fully to explain the position of affairs in this quarter, we must ask the reader to accompany us

into the more inner regions of Inner Asia, where the Turanian tribes had their headquarters. There about the year BC. 200, a Turanian people called the Yue-chi were expelled from their territory on the west of China by the Hiong-nu, whom some identify with the Huns. The Yue-chi separated into two bands: the smaller descended southwards into Thibet, the larger passed westwards and after a hard struggle, dispossessed a people called 'Su,' of the plains west of the river of Ili. The latter advanced to Ferghana and the Jaxartes, and the Yue-chi not long afterwards retreating from the Usun another nomadic race, passed the 'Su' on the north and occupied the tracts between the Oxus and the Caspian. The 'Su' were thus on the vicinity of the Bactrian Greeks, the Yue-chi in the neighbourhood of the Parthians.[1] On the just causes of this account, which comes from the Chinese historians we cannot perhaps altogether depend, but there is no reason to doubt the main fact, testified by an eye-witness, that the Yue-chi having migrated about the period mentioned from the interior of Asia, had established themselves sixty years later (BC. 140) in the Caspian region. Such a movement would necessarily have thrown the entire previous population of those parts into commotion, and would probably have precipitated them upon their neighbours. It accounts satisfactorily for the unusual pressure of the northern hordes at this period on the Parthians, the Bactrians, and even the Indians; and it completely explains the events of Parthian history

[1] See Wilson's "Ariana Antiqua," p. 295.

which we have now considered and the necessity which lay upon the nations of meeting, and if possible overcoming, a new danger.

In fact one of those occasions of peril had arisen to which we have before alluded, and to which in ancient times the civilised world was always liable from an outburst of northern barbarism. Whether the peril has altogether passed away or not we need not here inquire, but certainly in the old world there was always a chance that civilisation, art, refinement, luxury, might suddenly and almost without warning be swept away by an overwhelming influx of savagery from the North. From the reign of Cyaxares, when the evil so far as we know first showed itself, the danger was present to all wise and far-seeing governors both in Europe and Asia, and was from time to time guarded against. The expeditions of Cyrus against the Massagetæ or Darius II. against the European Scyths of Vassilevka against the Getæ, of Trajan and Probus across the Danube were designed to check and ultimately to break the northern nations, to break their power, and to diminish the likelihood of their taking the offensive. It was now more than four centuries since in this part of Asia any such effort had been made, and the northern barbarians might naturally have ceased to fear the arms and discipline of the South. Moreover the circumstances of the time scarcely left them a choice. Pressed on continually more and more by the newly arrived Hsiu-nu and Yuechi, the old inhabitants of the Trans-Oxanian regions were under the necessity of seeking new settlements and could only attempt to find them in

the quarter towards which they were driven by the new comers. Strengthened probably by many spirits from among their conquerors themselves, they crossed the rivers and the deserts by which they had been hitherto confined, and advancing against the Parthians, Bactrians, and Arians, threatened to carry all before them. In Bactria, soon after the establishment of the Greco-Bactrian kingdom they began to give trouble. Province after province was swallowed up by the invaders who occupied Sogdiana, or the tract between the Lower Jaxartes and the Lower Oxus, and hence proceeded to make inroads into Bactria itself. The rich land on the Polytimetas, or Ak-su the river of Samarcand, and even the highlands between the Upper Jaxartes and Upper Oxus, were permanently occupied by Turanian immigrants, and, if the Bactrians had not compensated themselves for their losses by acquisitions of territory in Afghanistan and India they would seem have had no kingdom left. The hordes were always increasing in strength through the influx of fresh tribes. Bactria was pressed to the south-eastward and precipitated upon its neighbours in that direction.

Presently, in Arachosia the hordes passed the mountains, and proceeding southwards, occupied the tract below the great lake wherein the Helmend terminates, which took from them the name of Sacastana "the land of the Saka or Scyths"—a name still to be traced in the modern Seistan. Further to the east they effected a lodgment in Cabul, and neither in the southern portion of the Indus valley, which for a time bore the name of Indo-Scythia. They even

crossed the Indus and attempted to penetrate to the interior of Hindustan, but here they were met and repulsed by a native monarch, about the year B.C. 56.

The people comprised in this great movement are called in a general way by the classical writers Scythians or Scythae. They consisted of a number of tribes, similar for the most part in language, habits, and mode of life, and allied more or less closely to the other nomadic races of Central and Northern Asia. Of these tribes the principal were the Massagetae ("great Jats or Jats"), the former adversaries of Cyrus, who occupied the country on both sides of the lower course of the Oxus, the Dahae, who bordered the Caspian above Hyrcania, and extended thence to the confines of Herat, the Tochari, who settled in the mountains between the Upper Jaxartes and the Upper Oxus, where they gave name to the tract known as Tocharistan, the Asi or Asians, who were closely connected with the Tochari, and the Sacarauli, who are found connected with both the Tochari and the Asiani. Some of these tribes contained within them further subdivisions, as the Dahae who comprised the Parni or Aparni, the Pissuri and the Xanthii; and the Massagetae, who included among them Chorasmii, Attasii, and others.

The general character of the barbarism in which these various races were involved may be best learnt from the description given of one of them, with but few differences, by Herodotus and Strabo. According to these writers, the Massagetae were nomades who

moved about in waggons or carts like the modern Kalmucks accompanied by their flocks and herds, on whose milk they chiefly sustained themselves. Each man had only one wife, but all the wives were held in common. They were good riders, and excellent archers, but fought both on horseback and on foot, and used besides their bows and arrows, lances, swords, and battle axes. They had little or no iron, but made their spear and arrow-heads, and their other weapons of bronze. They had also bronze breastplates, but otherwise the metal with which they adorned and protected their own persons and the heads of their horses, was gold. To a certain extent they were cannibals. It was their custom not to let the aged among them die a natural death, but, when life seemed approaching its term, to offer them up in sacrifice and then boil the flesh and feast upon it. Thus mode of ending life was regarded as the best and most honourable, such as died of illness were not eaten, but buried, and their friends bewailed their misfortune. It may be added to this, that we have sufficient reason to believe, that the Massagetæ and the other nomads of these parts regarded the use of poisoned arrows in warfare as legitimate and employed the venom of serpents and the corrupted blood of man to make the wounds which they inflicted more deadly.

Thus what was threatened by the existing position of affairs was not merely the conquest of one race by another cognate to it like that of the Medes by the Persians, or of the Greeks by Rome, but the obliteration of such art, civilisation, and refinement as

Western Asia had attained to in the course of ages by the successive efforts of Babylonians, Assyrians, Medes, Persians, and Greeks—the spread over some of the forest regions of the earth of a low type of savagery—a type which in religion went no further than the worship of the Sun—in art knew but the rudest forms of pottery and the construction of carts, in manners and customs, scheme of government, the use of personal weapons, and a relation between the sexes destructive even of a decently ordered family affection. The Parthians were no doubt rude and coarse in their character as compared with the Persians, but they had been civilized to some extent by three centuries of subjection to the Persians and the Greeks. Before they rose to power, they adopted Persian manners, they patronized Greek art, they had a smattering of Greek literature, they appreciated the advantages of having on their coast a number of Grecian states. Many of their kings called themselves upon their coins "Philhellenes," or "lovers of the Hellenic people." Had the Massagetæ and their kindred tribes of Sacæ, Tochari, Dahæ, Yuechi, and Su, which now dominate the Parthian power, succeeded in sweeping it away, the practical destruction of all that is lovely or excellent in human life would have been marked. Scythicism would have overspread Western Asia. No doubt the conquerors would have learnt something from those whom they subjected to their yoke, but it cannot be supposed that they would have learnt much. The change would have been like that which passed over the Western Roman

[1] Lindsay, 'History of Chaldea and Assyria,' p. 215.

Empire when Goths, Vandals, Burgundians, Alans, Heruli, depopulated its fairest provinces and laid its civilisation in the dust. The East would have been barbarised, the gains of centuries would have been lost, the work of Cyrus, Darius, Alexander and other great benefactors of Asiatic humanity, would have been undone. Western Asia would have sunk back into a condition not very much above that from which it had been raised two thousand years previously by the primitive Chaldæans and the Assyrians.

The first monarch to recognise the approach of the crisis and its danger was Phraates II, the son of Mithridates I, and the conqueror of Antiochus Sidetes. Not that the danger presented itself to his imagination in its full magnitude, but that he first woke up to the perception of the real position of affairs in the East, and saw that whereas Parthia's most formidable enemy had hitherto been Syria, and the Syro-Macedonian power it had now become Scythia and the Saca. No sooner did the pressure of the nomades begin to make itself felt on his north-eastern frontier than, relinquishing all ideas of Syrian conquests, if he had really entertained them, he left his seat of empire in Babylonia to the care of a viceroy (Himerus, or Evemerus) and marched in person to confront the new peril. The Scythians apparently had attacked Parthia Proper from their seats in the Oxus region. Phraates, in his haste to collect a sufficient force against them, enlisted in his service a large body of Greeks—the remnants mainly of the defeated army of Antiochus—and taking with him also a strong body of Parthian troops, marched to the

best speed eastward. A war followed to the mountain region which must have lasted for some years, but of which we have only the most meagre account. At last there was an engagement in which the Scythians got the worst of it, and the Parthian troops began to overrun and threaten to break up the Greeks, who had been from the first disaffected and had only waited for an occasion to mutiny, went over in a body to the enemy, and so decided the battle. Indeed, many of their allies in the Parthian army were said to have joined in the attack that was made on the camp. In every point of view Phraates had rashly provoked the Greeks with whom he could ill afford to be supposed to have quarrelled much before. It would have been surprising if he had ever gained so strong a thing as the fidelity of a body of luxurious and over-civilised Greeks with the utter barbarians against whom he was contending, or had engaged them in so remote a region cut off from the rest of their country as they would have to go to face a step which must have thrown them entirely on their own resources.

We have no information with regard to the ultimate fate of the Greek mercenaries. As for the Scythians, with that waste of energy and of a settled purpose which characterised them, they proceeded to plunder and ravage the provinces of the Parthian territory which lay open to them and, when they had thus wasted their strength, returned quietly to their homes.

The Parthian makes appearance as monarch, in place of the exiled king, an uncle of his named Artabanus who is known in history as Artabanus the

Second." He was probably advanced in years, and might perhaps have been excused if he folded his arms, awaited the attack of his foes, and stood wholly on the defensive. But he was brave and energetic, and what was still more important, he appears to have appreciated the perils of the position. He was not content, when the particular band of barbarians, which had defeated and slain his predecessor, having ravaged Parthia Proper, returned home, to sit still and wait till he was attacked in his turn. According to the brief but emphatic words of Justin he assailed the aggressive race, invaded the country of

COIN OF ARTABANUS II

the Tochari, one of the most powerful of the Scythian tribes, which was now settled in a portion of the region that had, till lately, belonged to the Bactrian kingdom. Artabanus evidently felt that what was needed was, not simply to withstand, but to roll back the flood of invasion which had advanced so near to the sacred home of his nation, that the barbarians required to be taught a lesson, that they must at least be made to understand that Parthia was to be respected. If this could not be done, the fate of the empire was sealed. He therefore with a generosity and boldness that we cannot sufficiently admire—a boldness that seemed like rashness—but

was in reality prudence—without calculating too closely the immediate chances of battle he led his troops against one of the most forward of the advancing tribes. But fortune unhappily was adverse. How the battle was progressing we are not told, but it appears that, in the thick of an engagement, Artabanus who was leading his men received a wound in the fore arm, from the effect of which he died almost immediately. The death of the leader on either side decides in the East, almost to a certainty, the issue of a conflict. We cannot doubt that the Parthians, having lost their monarch, were repulsed, that the expedition failed, and that the situation of affairs became once more at least as threatening as it had been before Artabanus made his attempt. Two Parthian monarchs had now fallen, within the space of a few years, in combat with the aggressive Scyths; two Parthian armies had suffered defeat. Was this to be always so? If it was, then Parthia had only to make up her mind to fall and, like the great Roman, to let it be her care that she should fall gracefully and with dignity.

VIII

MITHRIDATES II AND THE NOMADS—WAR WITH ARMENIA—FIRST CONTACT WITH ROME

ARTABANUS II was succeeded on the throne by his son, Mithridates II about the year B.C. 124. His military achievements were considerable, and procured him the epithet of 'the Great,' though that title was perhaps better deserved by Mithridates the First, his uncle. However the reign of the second Mithridates was undoubtedly a distinguished one, and it is most unfortunate that the accounts of it, which have come down to us are so meagre and unsatisfactory. We can but trace the history of Parthia during his time in its general outline with very scanty details and those not always altogether trustworthy.

There seems however, to be no doubt, that his earliest efforts after mounting the throne were directed to the quarter where the great danger pressed—the danger which had proved fatal to his two immediate predecessors, his cousin and his uncle. Probably in thus determining, he scarcely exercised any choice. The Scyths after their terrible victory, would naturally take an attitude so menacing that unless immediately met and crushed all hope of empire must have had to be

given up. Absolute ruin would have had to be met and faced.—Parthia would have been overrun, and the empire established by the first Mithridates would have been extinguished within twenty or thirty years of its first appearance, under the seventh. The young king, perceiving his peril, bent every effort to meet and repel it. He employed the whole force of the state upon his north-eastern frontier, and, in a series of engagements, successfully checked the advance of the Scyths, that from his time the danger which had been impending wholly passed away. The nomads gave up the hope of making any serious impression on the Arsacid kingdom, and, turning their restless energies in another direction, found a vent for their superabundant population in the far East in Afghanistan and India, where they settled themselves and set up permanent governments. Parthia was so completely relieved from their attacks, that she was able once more to take the aggressive in this region, and to extend her sway at the expense of the nations before which she had so lately trembled. The annexation of parts of Bactria from the Scythe, which is attested by Strabo, belongs to all probability to this reign, and it is even possible that the extension of Parthian power over Sacastane, or Seistan, dates from the same period. We are assured that the Scythian "passed many times to the Parthian Empire." As these were decidedly not on the western side of the empire, where Mithridates did not even succeed in *acquiring* Armenia, it would seem that they must have lain towards the East, in which case it would be almost certain that they mus-

have been carrying troops of the recent scythic immigration.

The successes of Mithridates in this quarter left him at liberty, after a time, to turn his attention towards the west where through Syria was no longer to be dreaded, troubles of various kinds had broken out which could no longer be safely neglected. Hymenus, or Fannius, the viceroy appointed to direct the affairs of the west from Ephesus by Pharnaces II when he marched eastward against the Scythi, had greatly misconducted himself in his government and almost shaken himself free from the Parthian yoke. He had treated the inhabitants of Bargylon with extreme cruelty condemning many of them to slavery, and sending them into Media besides burning the market place, several temples, and other buildings of that great city. He had greatly encouraged luxury and extravagance had [illegible] away by his exactions and lavished the state, of [illegible] not actually claim the title of an independent monarch. Mithridates on reaching the West crushed the nascent rebellion of Hymenus and having thus recovered dominion over those regions proceeded to engage in war with a new enemy.

Armenia, the new enemy was a territory of very considerable importance, and we [illegible] so mixed up with Parthia in her various wars and negotiations that some account of the country and people, and of the previous history of the people seems to be necessary.

According to Justin Armenia was a tract covered [illegible] by [illegible] on every [illegible] But

this is an extravagant estimate. If we extend Armenia from the Caspian to the range of Taurus, we cannot make its length much more than seven hundred miles; and if we even allow it to have reached from the Caucasus to Mount Masius and the lake of Urumiyeh, we cannot make its width more than four hundred miles. But practically its limits were almost always much narrower. Iberia and Albania were ordinarily independent countries, occupying the modern Georgia, and intervening between Armenia and the Caucasus; the Euphrates was the natural boundary of Armenia on the west, and Niphates, rather than Mons Masius, shut it in upon the south. Its normal dimensions have been already estimated in this volume at six hundred miles in length by a little more than two hundred in breadth, and its area at about sixty or seventy thousand square miles. There is no reason to believe that, during the Parthian period, it ever much exceeded these dimensions, except it were during the fourteen years (B.C. 83 to 69) when, under Tigranes I. it held possession of the dwindled kingdom of the Seleucidæ.

Armenia was a country of lofty ranges, deep and narrow valleys, numerous and copious streams, and occasional broad plains—a country of rich pasture grounds, productive orchards, and abundant harvests. It occupied the highest position in Western Asia, and contained the sources of all the great rivers of these parts—the Euphrates, the Tigris, the Halys, the Araxes, and the Cyrus—which rising within a space of two hundred and fifty miles long by a hundred wide flow away in four directions to three different seas.

It was thus to this part of Asia what Switzerland is to Western Europe an elevated fastness region containing within it the highest mountains, and yielding the waters which fertilise the subjacent regions. It contained also two large lakes each occupying its own basin and having no connexion with any sea—those of Van and Urumyeh—salt lakes of a very peculiar character. The mountain tracts yielded supplies of gold, silver, copper, lead, and other metals, beside emery and antimony. The soil in the valleys was fertile and bore several kinds of grain, the flanks of the hills grew vines, and the pastures produced horses and mules of good quality.

The Armenians of Parthian times were probably identical with the race, which, still under the same name occupies the greater portion of the old country, and holds an important position among the inhabitants of Western Asia. They are a pure race, with a somewhat sallow complexion, marked features, and dark eyebrows and hair. By their language which can be traced back to the fourth century of our era, it appears that they are an Aryan people, but with a certain amount of Turanian admixture. Their relations are closer with the Persians than probably with any other race, but still they possess many notable points of difference. They are of a weaker physique than the Persians, slighter in their frames, less muscular and robust. They are subtle, wily, with great talent for commerce, but wanting in strength, stamina, and endurance. In the earlier times they were strongly attached to their own independence, and though seldom able to maintain it for long were continually

reasserting it whenever an opportunity seemed to offer. But they have now for many centuries been absolutely quiescent, and are patient under the harsh rule of the three races which hold them in subjection—the Russians, the Persians, and the Turks.

Historically, the Armenians of to-day cannot be traced further back than about the sixth century B.C., when they appear to have immigrated into the territory that they have from that time occupied. Previously their land was possessed by three powerful and warlike races who are thought to have been Turanians, and who from the tenth to the seventh century B.C. were continually at war with the great Assyrian Empire. These were the Nairi, the Urartæans, and the Mannæans or Manni—names which constantly recur in the cuneiform inscriptions. The Nairi were spread from the mountains west of lake Van along both sides of the Tigris, to beyond the Euphrates, and even further; the Urartæans, or people of Ararat proper, were the Vannic of Herodotus, and dwelt north and east of the Nairi, on the Upper Euphrates, about the lake of Van and probably on the Araxes; while the Mannæans or Mannai, whose country lay south-east of the Urartæans, held the Urumiyeh basin, and the adjoining parts of Zagros. Of these three races, the Urartæans were the most powerful, and it was with them that the Assyrians waged their most bloody wars. The capital city of the Urartæans was Van, on the eastern shore of the lake, and here it was that the kings set up the most remarkable of their inscriptions. The language of these inscriptions is of a Turanian type, and though it may have furnished the non-Aryan element in the modern Armenian, cannot have been

its real main progenitor. An immigration must have occurred between the end of the Assyrian and the early part of the Persian period, which changed the population of the mountain region, submerging the original occupants in a far larger number of Aryan in-comers.

The first distinct knowledge that we obtain of this new people is from the inscriptions of Darius Hystaspis. Darius, after mentioning Armenia, Armina among the twenty-three provinces into which his empire was divided informs us that in the second year of his reign (B.C. 520), while he was at Babylon, a great revolt broke out, in which Armenia participated together with eight other districts. It was not till his third year that the revolt was put down in the Armenians as well as the other conquered races, making a most strenuous resistance. The names of the persons and of the places mentioned in the inscription seem to be Aryan as are the other Armenian names generally. On the successful suppression of the revolt and the full establishment of the power of Darius, Armenia together with several adjacent regions became a satrapy of the Persian Empire, the thirteenth, according to Herodotus, and was rated in the Royal Books as bound to furnish a revenue of four hundred talents—about £96,000—annually. From this time fidelity to the Persian monarchs was remarkable. Not only was the money tribute paid regularly, but a contribution of twenty thousand young mares was made each year to the Royal Stud, so far as appears without any murmuring. Contingents of troops were also readily furnished whenever required by the Great Monarch, and through the whole

Achæmenian period, after the reign of Darius, Armenia remained perfectly tranquil, and never caused the Persians the slightest alarm or anxiety.

After Arbela (B.C. 331) the Armenians submitted to Alexander without a struggle, or an attempt at regaining independence, and when in the division of his dominions which followed upon the battle of Ipsus (B.C. 301), they were assigned to Seleucus they acquiesced in the arrangement. It was not until Antiochus the Great suffered his great defeat at the hands of the Romans (B.C. 190), that all Western Asia was thrown into a ferment, that the Arian Armenians, after, at least, four centuries of subjection, raised their thoughts to independence and succeeded in establishing an autonomous monarchy. Even then the movement seems to have originated rather in the ambition of a chief than in any ardent desire for liberty upon the part of the people. Artaxias had been governor of the Greater Armenia in the earlier portion of the reign of Antiochus, and seized the opportunity afforded by the defeat of Magnesia to change his title of satrap into that of sovereign. Antiochus was too much occupied at home to resist him, and he was allowed to establish his power, to build a new capital at Artaxata near the Araxes, and to reign in peace for a space of about twenty-five years. Then, however, he was attacked by Antiochus Epiphanes. This prince (about B.C. 165) resolved on an attempt at re-establishing the power of Syria over Armenia, and invading the country with a large army, forced Artaxias to an engagement in which he defeated him and took him prisoner. Armenia, for the time sub-

mitted; but it was not long before fresh troubles broke out. When Mithridates I overran the eastern provinces of Syria about B.C. 150, and made himself master in succession of Media, Babylonia, and Elymais, Armenia was once more thrown into a state of excitement, and, partly by her own efforts, partly, it would seem, by Parthian assistance, threw off for a second time the Syrian yoke, and became again independent. This time it was an Arsacid prince, named Vagharshag or Valarsaces, a member of the Parthian royal family. A reign of twenty-two years is assigned to this monarch, whose kingdom is declared to have extended from the Caucasus to Nisibis, and from the Caspian to the Mediterranean. He was succeeded by a son named Arshag or Arsaces, who carried on wars with the neighbouring state of Pontus, and had a reign of thirteen years, probably from about B.C. 128 to B.C. 115. Artashes—the Ortoadistus of Justin—then became king, and was firmly seated on the Armenian throne when Mithridates II., nephew of Mithridates I., having brought the Scythic war to a successful termination, determined about B.C. 100 to make an attempt to add Armenia to his dominions.

No account has come down to us of the war between Ortoadistus and the invaders. The relative power of the two states was, however, such as to make it almost certain that in a collision between the two Parthia would have the advantage; and a casual allusion in Strabo appears to indicate pretty clearly that in point of fact the advantage gained was not inconsiderable. Strabo says that Tigranes, the eldest son of Ortoadistus, was a hostage in the hands of the Parthians for some

time before his accession to the throne—a statement from which it may be confidently inferred that Orteastes, having been worsted in battle by Mithridates, concluded with him an ignominious peace and as security for the performance of its terms gave hostages to the Parthian monarch he own son being among the number. Still, it is also clear, from the fact recorded, that Armenia, if worsted, was far from being subjugated—she ended the war by a treaty of peace—she maintained her own monarch upon the throne. She was not even seriously weakened in strength, since within the space of the next twenty years she attained to the height of her power absorbing the Syrian state and really ruling for a time from the Gulf of Issus to the shores of the Caspian.

It cannot have been more than a few years after the termination of the Armenian war which must have fallen about the close of the second, or the beginning of the first century before our era, that the Parthian state, while still under the rule of Mithridates II, was for the first time brought into contact with Rome.

Rome appears as a permanent factor in the politics of the East somewhat later than might have been expected. When, towards the close of the second century B.C., the ambition of the Great Antiochus dragged her unwillingly into Asiatic quarrels, she disinterested herself, as speedily as she could, of all ties binding her to Asia, and made what was almost a formal retreat to her own continent, and renunciation of the heritage of another, which fortune pressed upon her. For more than half a century the policy of abstention was pursued. The various states of

Western Asia was left to fight out their own schemes of self-aggrandisement and to settle their own quarrels without Roman interference. But in course of time, the reasons for the policy of abstention disappeared. Macedonia and Greece had been last conquered and absorbed and Carthage destroyed (in 148–146), the conditions of the political problem seemed to be so far changed as to render a further advance towards the East a safe measure, and accordingly when it was perceived that the days of the kings of Pergamus was coming to an end, the Senate set on foot intrigues which had for their object the development upon Roman of the several states belonging to those monarchs. By dexterous management the third Attalus was induced, in repayment of his father's obligations to the Romans, to take the extraordinary and wholly unprecedented step of bequeathing by will his entire dominions as a legacy to the Republic. In vain did his illegitimate half-brother Aristonicus dispute the validity of so strange a testament, the Romans, aided by Mithridates IV. of Pontus, each of whom claimed Phrygia, which had been left to the Pergamene kingdom, entered on the possession of the remainder. Having thus become an Asiatic power, the Great Republic was of necessity involved henceforth with the various movements and struggles which agitated Western Asia, and was naturally led to strengthen its position among the Asiatic powers by such alliances as seemed at each conjuncture to be best suited to its interests.

Hitherto no occasion had arisen for any direct dealings between Rome and Parthia. Their respective territories were still separated by considerable tracts, which were in the occupation of the Syrians, the Cappadocians, and the Armenians. Their interests had neither clashed nor as yet sufficiently united them to give rise to any diplomatic intercourse. But the progress of the two empires in opposite directions was slowly but surely bringing them nearer to each other; and events had now reached a point at which the empires began to have, or to seem to have, such a community of interests as led naturally to an exchange of communications. A new power had been recently developed in these parts. In the rapid way so common in the East Mithridates V of Pontus, the son and successor of Ariarathes IV, had, between B.C. 115 and B.C. 93, built up an empire of vast extent, large population and almost inexhaustible resources. He had established his authority over Armenia Minor, Colchis, the entire eastern coast of the Black Sea, the Chersonesus Taurica or kingdom of the Bosporus, and even over the whole tract lying west of the Chersonese as far as the mouth of the Tyras or Dniestr. Nor had these gains contented him. He had obtained half of Paphlagonia by an iniquitous compact with Nicomedes, King of Bithynia; he had occupied Galatia; and he was engaged in attempts to bring Cappadocia under his influence. In this last-mentioned project he was assisted by the Armenians, with whose king, Tigranes, the son of Artaeustas, he had about B.C. 96 formed a close alliance, at the same time giving him his daughter, Cleopatra, in

marriage. Rome though she had not yet determined on war with Mithridates was bent on thwarting his Cappadocian projects, and in 92 sent Sulla into Asia, with orders to put down the puppet king whom Mithridates and Tigranes were establishing and to replace upon the Cappadocian throne a certain Ariobarzanes whom they had driven from his kingdom. In the execution of this commission Sulla was brought into hostile collision with the Armenians, and to be defeated with great slaughter, and drove from Cappadocia together with their wretched king. Thus, not only did the growing power of Mithridates of Pontus by inspiring both Rome and Parthia with a common fear, tend to draw them together but the course of events had actually given them a common enemy in Tigranes of Armenia who was equally hateful to both of them.

For Tigranes, who during the time that he was a hostage in Parthia, had contracted engagements towards the Parthian monarch which involved a cession of territory, and who on the faith of his pledges had been aided by the Parthians in seating himself on his father's throne though he made the concessions required of him at the first instance, and soon after wantonly repudiated all his promises, had gone to war with his benefactors, recovered the ceded territory, and also wrested a considerable tract of country lying within the admitted limits of the Parthian kingdom. These proceedings had of course irritated Mithridates II., and we may with much probability ascribe to them the step which he now took of sending an ambassador to Sulla. Orobazus the individual selected, was charged

with the duty of protecting an alliance offensive and defensive between the two countries. The Roman general received the overture favourably but probably considered that it transcended his powers to conclude a treaty; and thus no further result was secured by the embassy than the establishment at their first contact of a friendly understanding between the two states.

Soon after this Lucullus appears to have undertaken his attacks upon Parthia, which in the interval between 87 and 69 B.C. had greatly increased its territory at the cost of Upper Mesopotamia, at

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this time called Armenia, or the country of the Kurds and under the rule of one of the Parthian tributary kings. Rome was too deeply engaged in the first Mithridatic war to send Parthia any aid even if she had been so disposed; and Parthia herself seems to have been suffering from domestic troubles, a time of confusion and disturbance having followed on the death of Mithridates II about B.C. 89.

Mithridates the Second is commonly regarded as the most distinguished of all the Parthian monarchs after his uncle Mithridates the First. He has a fine head upon his coins with a large eye and a pro-

ancient Roman nose. He takes the epithets of "Benefactor" and "Saviour." The obverse of his coins is commonly adorned with the sitting Parthian figure with an outstretched bow; but sometimes Orobazus instead of this has a Pegasus or winged horse. The military exploits of the prince were undoubtedly remarkable, and it is unfortunate for him that the record of them is so scanty. It is certain that he made a deep impression upon the Scythian hordes, and thus averted from his country a great danger. It is probable that he considerably enlarged the limits of his empire on the side of Bactria and India. But, on the whole, perhaps his permanent fame will rest mainly upon the two facts, that he was the first to initiate those Armenian wars which occupied so large a portion of the later Parthian history, and that he was also the first to bring Parthia into contact with the most formidable of all her external enemies, Rome; and thus—though with far different result—to pave the way for those many bloody struggles with the Great Imperial Power which for nearly three centuries—from the time of Crassus to that of Caracalla—riveted the attention of mankind upon the East.

IX.

DARK AGE OF PARTHIAN HISTORY—ACCESSION OF ARTABANUS—PHRAATES II AND HERMAEUS

The reign of Mithridates II introduced into Parthian history, as has been already observed, a period of confusion and disturbance. Civil wars are, according to one authority, rife during this period, according to another, there was a rapid succession of princes. It would seem that the vassal states of the Arsacidae had pretty nearly ceased to exist, and as the superstition still prevailed that birth conferred the right of any prince whose veins the old royal blood did not run were allowed to ascend the throne, very many members of the royal house had to be slaughtered, and the royal authority committed to boys that were quite infants. One king who has been thought to belong to the period is said to have died at the age of ninety years, another was eighty at his accession. Under these circumstances it may well have been that younger rivals sprang up whenever the reins of government were held by such, who disputed the crown with the decrepit monarchs possessed, to the position by the Magistrates and threw the whole country into confusion. These quarrels fell out at an unfortunate

[1] See Appendix.

conjuncture. Rome had at last been forced into a conflict with Mithridates of Pontus—for this possession of the two great powers lay for the moment Greater Armenia free and Artavasdes under Pompey's protection of the most ambitious princes that ever had looked forward to the advantages of the succession wars. The Mithridatic war was proceeding and also during the eleven years that it lasted (C. 88–74) employed herself in building up a powerful and extensive empire. Not content with recovering from Parthia the portion of territory which he had begun by ceding to her Tigranes had quite early in his reign, carried his aggressions much further and had made himself master of the most important Parthian provinces Gordyene or Northern Mesopotamia, with Adiabene or the tract between the Zab rivers including Assyria Proper and Arbelitis. He had conquered Sophene or the west Armenia which was then governed by a king named Artanes and had also brought under subjection the extensive and valuable country of Media Atropatene, which had maintained its independence since the time of Alexander. Nor had these successes contented him. Invited into Syria about B.C. 83 by the weak Seleucidae, who were even to-day pointed out by the Syrians as the cause of all their misfortunes in consequence of the wars between rival princes of the house of the Seleucidae, he had found no difficulty in overthrowing the last of the race Antiochus XIII. Philippus and establishing himself as sole ruler of Syria and most of Phoenicia. Many years he had determined on building a new capital on the Euphrates to be the place of residence of the court and the centre of administration for his vast empire and with the wealth required by

an Oriental Court, and fortified with walls such as should recall the glories of the ancient cities of the Assyrians. Twelve Greek cities were dependent to furnish Tigranocerta with the new capital was stocked with a sufficiency of Hellenic inhabitants: three hundred thousand Cappadocians were at the same time transported thither; and the population was further increased by contingents from Cilicia, Adiabene, and Assyria Proper. A royal palace on a large scale was constructed in the immediate vicinity, together with extensive parks or "paradises," marshes were stocked with wild fowl, and well-appointed hunting establishments. The walls of the city are declared to have been seventy-five feet in height, and the dimension evidently was to constitute it a standing menace to Seleucia, Ctesiphon, Babylon, or whatever might be made the Parthian western capital. The impression of Parthia by Armenia was clearly aimed at; and it was only a slight step in advance when future Tigranes placed upon his coins the ancient title of the Great Sovereigns of Asia—recently claimed only by the Arsacian monarchs—the title of *Basileus Basileôn*.

The emergence of Armenia into the position of a Great Power would, under any circumstances, have tended to throw Parthia into the shade; and now occurring as it did when she was already under a load of ills with civil contests rife and guided by the most unskilful hands of any, and for many months it produced her almost entire disappearance. For twenty years from BC. 89 to BC. 69 and the rapid movements that occupy the field of Oriental history,

we scarcely obtain a glimpse of Parthia, which is soon shut out of sight by the stronger and harder forms that fill the space and force themselves on our attention.

It is with difficulty that, by dint of careful search, we at length discover or fancy we discover among the fierce struggles of the times two shadowy forms of Parthian kings to place at this interval as links connecting the earlier with the later history. The first of these is a certain Mithridates of whom Justin appears to speak as a Parthian prince who reached

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the great age of ninety-six years, but who it is impossible to assign to any of the periods. The other is a somewhat better known personage, a certain Sinatruces called also Sinatroces and Sintricus, who has left his name upon some of his coins and to us upon tablets by several authors. This last-named monarch appears to have reigned from [illegible] to 60, and thus to have been a contemporary

[illegible] Mithridates [illegible] Parthian [illegible] Parthia [illegible]

with Tigranes of Armenia Mithridates of Pontus and the Roman general Lucullus. He was seventy nine years old at his accession, and is said to have been indebted for his crown to an accident in the civil struggles, wherein he was engaged with rivals, by the Scythic tribes of the Sacaurace. During his short reign it was his special endeavour to hold himself aloof from the quarrels of his neighbours and thus escape the fate of the earlier put about brought into collision with them once. He entirely declined the overtures of Mithridates for an alliance which were made to him in B.C. 72, and when at last the war had approached his own frontier, and, the most earnest appeals for assistance not being from both parties, he found it impossible to maintain the line of pure abstinence, he had recourse to the expedient of assisting both sides with promises, which he kept to neither and to either. Plutarch tells us that this course of action greatly annoyed Lucullus, that at one time it almost induced him to enter into a more important war with Phraates and his ally Tigranes, and forget his whole force at his command against Parthia. But the prolonged resistance of Nysibis and the success of Mithridates in Pontus not only averted the danger, and, the war raging northwards, Parthia was not yet drawn to take a side, but found herself able to maintain her neutral position for a few years longer.

The turning point of the Mithridatic War was the recall of Lucullus in 66 and his replacement by one of the greatest Roman generals of the time, Gnaeus Pompeius. Pompey's generalship showed him at

ance that so long as Rome was allowed to contend single-handed with two such powerful enemies as Mithridates and Tigranes success could not be reasonably expected. The Parthian and Armenian kings played into each other's hands, and between them possessed such advantages in local position, in men and in resources that the war might go on indefinitely without any clear and decisive issue unless its conditions could be changed. He looked about therefore to see whether a new factor could not be called in and a change in the balance of force be thereby brought about. Might not Parthia, which had rejected the cheap blandishments of Lucullus and despised his empty threats, be won over by somewhat more dexterous management, and more refined diplomacy? A Parthian monarch was now seated upon the throne who was untried, to whom overtures had not yet been made who at any rate had not committed himself to the policy of abstention. Might he not be prevailed upon? Might not Hiradates the Exile, the son of Sanatruces who had just succeeded his father upon the Parthian throne, be induced by a sufficiently tempting promise, to join his forces with those of Rome in the war and so place the preponderance of military strength on the Roman side? The only question was what would be a sufficiently tempting offer? Pompey thought it enough to persuade himself that if Parthia espoused his cause and gave him the assistance which he required, Armenia should at the end of the war be compelled to make restitution to her of her lost provinces. She should be once more put in possession of Gordyene,

and Adiabene. The last took Phraates came into the terms proposed and Parthia for the first and last time became a Roman ally.

The general terms of the agreement made between the high contracting parties seem to have been that while Rome pressed the war against the Pontine monarch unceasingly and without remission in her efforts Phraates should enter Armenia and lend assistance for Tigranes in his own country. As Parthia and Armenia were conterminous along an extended line of frontier Phraates could make his advance where he pleased, and how he pleased. It happened that he had at his Court an Armenian refugee of the highest consequence—no less a person than the Crown Prince of Armenia, or eldest surviving son of Tigranes who having quarrelled with his father had raised a rebellion and being defeated had been forced to fly and seek a refuge in Parthia. Phraates determined to take account of this circumstance. Having completed his arrangements with Pompey, he in the year BC 66 placed himself at the head of his troops and in conjunction with the Armenian prince invaded the territory of Tigranes. The prince had a party in the country which desired to see a youthful monarch upon the throne and was soon joined by a considerable body of supporters. The combined army penetrated deep into Armenia advancing upon the capital Artaxata, whither Tigranes had retreated. The Armenian march made, however, no stand, even at his metropolis, but, when his foes stood prepared to assault the city, fled to the neighbouring mountains. Artaxata was invested, but as the

was promised to the king. Phraates became tired of sitting before the place, and persuaded himself that he had done enough to satisfy Pompey and might safely leave the young prince with a contingent of Parthian troops and his own arrangements to carry on the war against his father. Accordingly, he returned, and the young prince remained in sole command. He raised the siege which must have been anticipated. Scarcely was Phraates withdrawn when the old king descending suddenly from his fastnesses, fell upon his son's army at Ithaxates, defeated it and drove it out of the country. He thus recovered full possession of Armenia and was once more in a position to render help to Mithridates against Pompey; but the time for giving effectual help was gone by. Pompey had made such good use of the interval during which the hands of Tigranes were fully employed that in a single campaign he had broken the power of Mithridates, forced him to a long flight from place to place, and finally forced him to seek a refuge beyond the Phasis at Dioscurias, on the modern Mingrelia. Lucullus's policy of Tigranes was to work it make him a check against Rome, and his complete abandonment in the autumn of 67 B.C. left Pompey at liberty to settle the affairs of the East at his pleasure.

The settlement made was not very pleasing to the Court of the Parthian king. Like all successful conquerors, Tigranes had proclaimed himself by the gift of six thousand talents to Lucullus a friend and ally of the Roman people, and had added to his dominions many districts of Syria which were looked on as actually belonging to the province. Such

left in full possession of his ancestral kingdom of Armenia, and not even molested in the valuable province of Gordyene, which he had seized in the time of the late Parthian troubles. Mithridates, indeed, *Abridged* the younger, Pompey was by no means the petty prince many of his flatterers and even historians represent him; and when he returned and remonstrated, was not only put in confinement, and reserved by Pompey for his triumph. He himself gained nothing in the Roman province but the recovery of Acesamene, of which he no doubt had been possessed before his time. Armenia in the Greek. Where he attempted, with but Pompey's permission, to treat in Gordyene the province which had proved successful on the third of the Cyrus. Pompey did not scruple to resent even in open war any encroachments, that the province had been actually promised to him as the price of his services. Phraates himself was known promises were worth, when, on seeing to surpasses himself of Crete, he was met by Pompey's agent Ammius, who at the head of an armed force drove his troops from the country, and proceeded to deliver it into the hands of the Armenians. Polemo, in order to keep open places for the return which would be worse Parthian Romans must communicate even in the last extremity Armenia. Romans must ever assist any against her, but no pains of policy could secure the success must accrue to the Parthian monarch, who, by virtue of his command, assumed the general recognised title of "King of Kings."

There can be little doubt that at this

Pompey was balancing in his mind with a reluctance to the affirmative side, the question whether he should, or should not, declare the Parthian prince a Roman enemy and direct the forces of the Republic against him. There was much to attract him to the formation of such a decision. His military career had been hitherto without a reverse. He had great confidence in his good fortune. If not as ambitious as his rival, Julius, he was at any rate thoroughly desirous of placing in the eyes of his own countrymen as unquestionably the foremost man of his race. To engage a new enemy, and that enemy the most powerful successor of Alexander in Persia in the inheritance of the Asiatic dominion, to tread in the steps of Alexander, and carry the arms of the West to the shores of the ocean which shut in the world upon the East, would give him a prestige which would elevate him far above Cæsar, and surely realize the dreams that he had ever entertained of distinction and glory. He, on the other hand, prudence counselled abstinence from a risky enterprise. As the war had not been formally committed to him, his interests at home would make his having entered upon it a ground of accusation. He had seen, moreover, with his own eyes that the Parthians were an enemy far from despicable, and his knowledge of campaigning told him that success against them was by no means certain. He feared to risk the loss of all the gains which he had hitherto gained by grasping greedily at more, and deemed it wiser to enjoy the fruits of the good luck which had hitherto attended him than to tempt fortune on a new field

He therefore after hesitating for a while, determined firmly on a pacific course. He would not allow himself to be provoked into hostilities by the reproaches, the contemptuous words, or even the daring acts of the Parthian king. When Phraates demanded that the provinces, he replied, that the question of boundaries was one which lay, not between Parthia and Rome but between Parthia and Armenia. When he told him that the Euphrates properly and of right bounded the Roman territory in Mesopotamia, Pompey did not to cross it the latter sent he would keep to the most honorable, wherever they were. When Phraates on his part complained, that after having been received into the Roman alliance he was still attacked by the Parthian armies the reply of Pompey was that he was quite willing to appoint arbitrators who should decide all the disputes between the two nations. The moderation and dignity of these answers proved contagious. On hearing them the monarch addressed received to compose their differences, or at any rate to defer the settlement of them to a more convenient time when Rome should have withdrawn from the neighborhood. They accepted Pompey's proposal of an arbitration, and in a short time an arrangement was effected by which the terms of amity were re-established between the two countries.

With the retirement of Pompey from Asia in the year 63 B.C. the East settled down into a state of comparative tranquility. There was a general feeling that there was necessity to recruit the strength exhausted in the fierce and sanguinary wars of the last thirty years, and a general impression that

further contention would only advantage a common enemy—Rome. Rome had now to be looked upon as a permanent neighbour, secure as regards Cilicia, Syria, and Cappadocia, being, her base, and at any moment ready to take advantage of any false step which might be made by any of the Asiatic kingdoms. Parthia was having the most to lose had the most to fear, but Armenia was still more exposed to attack, and might expect to be assailed first. The other minor powers could only hope to escape destruction by remaining quiet, and cleaving no pretexts for the stronger states to fall violently.

But external tranquillity in Parthia was not too apt to be the precursor of domestic disturbance. Within two years of Pompey's departure from Asia a conspiracy was formed against the life of Phraates which resulted in his assassination. His two sons, Mithridates and Orodes, united and effected his destruction, for what reason or on what pretext we know not. Phraates had held the throne during a time of difficulty and had raised it not with signal success yet on the whole with prudence and vigour. He had shown himself an active commander, a far stronger and more successful negotiator. He was apparently in the full possession of all his powers and faculties when he was struck down. It seems as if the motive of the parricide must have been more personal and less than that unnatural longing to thrust a parent from his rightful place which has too often produced such tragedies more especially in the East.

Mithridates, the younger son, obtained the throne but scarcely succeeded in establishing himself firmly upon

it. Very early he brought his brother's jealousy of his brother and colleague to a crisis, Orodes, and drove him into banishment, while at the same time he treated a large number of the Parthian nobles with cruelty. The Magi-tanes consequently deposed him and the hereditary commander-in-chief brought back Orodes from exile, and set him up as king in his brother's room. As some compensation for the loss of his independent sovereignty, Mithridates was given the government of the important province of Media Magna; and had he been content to remain in this subordinate position he might probably have lived

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out the full term of his natural life in peace and quietness. But there are temperaments which nothing but actual kingship will content, after they have once had a taste of it, and the temperament of Mithridates would appear to have been of this order. He was raising an army with a view to the recovery of his lost throne when Orodes, having become aware of his intention, marched against him, and crushed his nascent rebellion. Mithridates had to cross the frontier, and place himself under the protection of the nearest Roman proconsul, who happened to be Gabinius, governor of Syria, who had obtained his post through the influence of Pompey. Gabinius,

a man of moderate [illegible] but of [illegible] ambition, readily received the [illegible] and [illegible] contem-plate an immediate [illegible] of the Parthian territory and an attempt to force Mithradates upon his unwilling subjects. The expedition would probably have taken place had it not [illegible] that just at the time the Syrian [illegible] received [illegible] from another quarter which [illegible] was more tempting. Ptolemy [illegible] father [illegible] expelled from Egypt by his [illegible] subjects, having obtained the countenance and patronage of Pompey, presented himself before Gabinius in the spring of B.C. 55 and [illegible] his powerful assistance in recovering his lost kingdom. The price which he was ready to pay for the [illegible] required was a sum of money [illegible] to [illegible] a half millions of our money [illegible] millions of [illegible]. Thus after [illegible] Gabinius, and it [illegible] persuade him that the opposition made by his officers was such as might perhaps have induced him to decline it had not the influence of the young Mark Antony, who was in his camp, been exerted in favour of [illegible] and his representations turned the scale in favour of the [illegible] venture. Mithradates, whose hopes had been raised to the highest pitch, was thus left to bear as he might [illegible] of his [illegible]. It is surprising that he [illegible] altogether [illegible]. But it would seem that he still [illegible] he saw a possible chance of success. The [illegible] Arab tribes recently settled by Tigranes in Mesopotamia were willing to espouse his cause, and the great cities of Seleucia and Babylon appear to have [illegible] in his favour. [illegible]

[illegible] circumstance he threw himself into Babylon, and there endured a long siege at the hands of his brother. It was not until food failed the garrison that a surrender was determined on. The act of Mithridates in urging that the loss of blood would be [illegible] commended by his adversary as worthy of one who hoped to spread the same penalty of rebellion [illegible] himself to fall [illegible] Orodes' hands. But fratricidal ambition was not strongly developed among the Parthians. Orodes, having declared that he [illegible] the claims of country above those of kindred, caused the traitor who had sought aid from Rome to be instantly executed in his presence. Such was the end of the third Mithridates, a weak and selfish prince, with whom it is impossible to feel any sympathy.

X

GREAT EXPEDITION OF CRASSUS AGAINST PARTHIA AND ITS FAILURE — RETALIATORY RAID OF PACORUS.

Crassus—or, to give him his full name, Marcus Licinius Crassus—the richest of the richest Romans of history, was neither a great man nor a great commander. Springing from a noble stock, the son of a respectable father, he first became noted for his skill and success in money-getting, an employment to which for many years he devoted all his energies, and which he pursued with an ardour and perseverance that made success certain. The times were favourable for the quick accumulation of a fortune by commercial methods. The civil struggles through which Rome was passing, were accompanied by a continual succession of forfeitures, confiscations, and forced sales, which gave an opportunity, even for moderate capitalists, within a comparatively short space, by judicious investments, to become men of large wealth. Crassus allowed no considerations of compassion, or friendship, or decency to hamper him in his barbarous; and the result was that in course of time he came to be the largest owner of the greater

portion of the soil on which Rome was built. His other possessions were in proportion. He had mines which were rich and productive, farms and well-cultivated estates, and, above all, an enormous number of valuable slaves. His own estimate of the worth of his property shortly before he started on his expedition rates it at about seven thousand talents, or more than a million and seven hundred thousand English pounds.

In Rome—as it was in the Rome of this time wealth became almost of necessity, to the individual. An enormous expenditure was needed in order to obtain the highest offices of the state, and these offices became naturally the objects of contention among the most ambitious men. The wealth of Crassus thrust him into a prominent position, and the position gradually awoke in him those ambitious longings which do not seem to have troubled him during his youth. After a time he began to court popularity, and to endeavour to outshine the other political favourites of the hour. He came forward as a pleader in the cause of such causes which others declined, and showed himself especially zealous and patient. He threw his house open to all, lent money freely to his friends without requiring interest, and exercised a wide if not a lavish hospitality. In this way he crept on into office, and by degrees worked his way up to the highest grades. There, the talents that he displayed without being brilliant were respectable. He came to be reckoned shrewd and safe. At last he was put on a par with the highest candidates for political power and, though really quite

undeserving of the position, was "bracketed" with Cæsar and Pompey in the so-called "First Triumvirate." The consulship followed in 55 B.C. as a matter of course, and when, on the lots being cast, Syria came out as his "province" Crassus found himself exalted to what was, practically, the first position in the state.

There is reason to believe that, for many long years, the ambition of Crassus, and his jealousy of the other chief political leaders especially of Pompey and Cæsar, had been growing and expanding. It was particularly in military renown that their reputation excelled his, and it was consequently in this respect that he was most anxious to place himself on their level, if not even as he hoped to excel and outdo them. In the position now assigned him he thought he saw his opportunity. The project of Gabinius had got wind, and it had flashed upon the imagination of Crassus how grand a thing it would be to reduce under the dominion of Rome a wholly new country, and that country the seat of ancient empires and the scene of the highest triumphs of Alexander. Like many another man of dull and plodding temper, Crassus never allowed the desire of glory to get a hold of him than his unstable mind was carried all lengths and indulged in fights of the most wild and irrational character. Instead of waiting till he had reached his province and examined into the position of affairs, before declaring how he would act or what enterprise he would undertake, Crassus immediately began to boast of and to publish his designs and intentions. He spoke of the wars

which Lucullus had waged against Tigranes and Pompey against Mithridates. Pompey's achievements may are declared that he was not going to content himself with such petty conquests as Lucullus had left them. Syria had not been long, as he thought, in Parthian hands, and it was his intention to carry the Roman arms to Bactria, India, and the Eastern Ocean. The more prudent among the statesmen of the Republic remonstrated but in vain. His friends and flatterers approved and encouraged him. Even Cæsar, who was then in Gaul to begin his career towards the dominion of a monarchy, wrote to him from Gaul to fan the flame of his ambition and stimulate his hopes. Crassus hurried on his preparations, and though the tribune Ateius endeavoured to detain him by a solemn curse and even, had the other tribunes permitted, would have arrested his steps at the city gates, set Rome some weeks before his ambition had expired, and, despising those warnings and omens set sail with a large fleet from Brundusium.

The passage of Crassus from Brundusium to the Peloponnesus was prosperous in the whole and uneventful. He lost a certain number of his transports in crossing the Adriatic which, as it was already mid November was not surprising. Landing at Dyrrhachium he passed through Macedonia and Thrace to the Hellespont and thence through Asia Minor into Syria where he established himself at Antioch. On his way he fell in with an old Roman ally, Deiotarus, King of Galatia, who happened to be building a new city at this time of route. As Deiotarus was an advanced in years, Crassus forgetting his own age

indulged in a joke at his expense. "You begin to hurry, Prince," he said, "rather late in the day," whereto the other replied with the retort, "And you too, Commander, are not beginning very early in the morning to attack the Parthians."

During the time that Crassus was making his preparations at Rome, and the further time that he spent upon his march, Orodes, the Parthian monarch, had an ample space for forming his general plan of campaign at his leisure, and making ready to receive

COIN OF ORODES I.

his enemy. Not only was he able to collect his native troops from all parts of the empire, and to arm, train, and exercise them, but he had an opportunity of keeping over certain chiefs upon his border, who, both to hold a semi-independent position, and might have been expected to welcome the Romans. The most important of these was Abgarus, prince of Osrhoene, or the tract lying east of the Euphrates about the city of Edessa, who had been received into the Roman alliance by Pompey, and was thought by the Romans generally to be well disposed to their cause. Orodes, however, persuaded him, while still

remaining prudently a Roman ally to give its secret support to the Parthian side. Another chief Alchaudonius an Arab sheikh of these parts, who had made his submission to Crassus earlier becoming convinced that Parthia was the stronger power of the two, went over to the same side. Orodes held himself on the left bank covering the important cities of Seleucia and Babylon with his troops and waiting to see in what way Crassus would develop his attack and by what route he would advance into the interior.

The proconsul was at first in no hurry. His old lust of gain came upon him and, forgetting his own fame, a more remunerative war in Mesopotamia, where he defeated a Parthian satrap at Ichnae on the Belik and received the voluntary submission of a number of small Greek towns which he garrisoned, he returned his steps once more westward, and gave himself up to a series of disreputable but very lucrative transactions. At Hierapolis, or Bambyce, where was a famous temple of the Syrian goddess Atergatis or Derceto, he entered the treasure carefully weighed all the offerings in the precious metals and then unscrupulously carried them off. Having heard of the treasures still remaining in the sanctuary of Aphaca at Jerusalem, not to be outdone by Pompey's sacrilege, he gave the city a visit for the same purpose of pecuniary relief. He carried off the golden ornaments and possessed himself by a pretext of a loan of seven talents of 750 pounds weight. In the other cities and states he contented himself with making requisitions of more moderate but still considerable sums. All

case he was willing to accept instead a composition in money. One Greek town in Mesopotamia, which resisted his arms, he took by storm and sacked, afterwards selling all the inhabitants, who survived the sack, as slaves.

Thus passed the autumn and winter of B.C. 54. The spring of B.C. 53 arrived and the proconsul began to see that he must absolutely do something to gratify his high hopes. Cæsar had sent him from Gaul his eldest son, a gallant youth and good officer who was burning to distinguish himself, and his quæstor, C. Cassius Longinus, was also a captain of repute who would have been ashamed to return to Rome without having dyed his sword upon some worthier enemy than a handful of miserable Greek colonists. Artavasdes too, the Armenian king, the son of the powerful Tigranes, was anxious that so large a Roman army as had been collected should not quit the neighbourhood without striking Parthia a blow that might seriously weaken, if not even permanently cripple her. With the first appearance of spring he came to the camp of Crassus and made him the offer of all the resources of his country. He promised the assistance of sixteen thousand cavalry, of whom ten thousand should be equipped in complete armour, and of thirty thousand infantry; at the same time strongly urging Crassus to direct his march through his own friendly territories, well supplied with water and provisions, and abounding with hills and streams suited to baffle the mounted archers of the terrible Parthian host. A march through South-eastern Armenia would conduct to the head-streams of the Tigris, whence

them was an easy route through a fertile and practicable country down the course of the river to Seleucia (Tesiphon), the capital of Parthia. Seleucia might be expected to welcome the Romans as liberators, and there were other Greek cities upon the route that might be important aid. The Armenian proposals had much that was tempting about them, and there were not wanting, some, among the more sober of the praetor's advisers to recommend their acceptance, but the hopes held out by the situation into which he had brought himself by his movements of the preceding year which had led to his placing garrisons in the various strongholds of Osrhoene, who now offered him a refuge in the hour of danger. He himself was compelled to decline the offered Armenian alliance, and it was probably with a feeling of relief that that prince broke up his camp and returned hastily to his own country.

On the part of Orodes no important movement was made during the winter season except his despatch of an embassy to the proconsul, which seems to have been intended rather to exasperate him than to induce him to forego his attack. The Parthian monarch, it may be suspected, had begun to despise his enemy. He would naturally compare him with Lucullus and Pompey, and when the close of the first year passed by without anything more important being undertaken than a raid into an adjoining province and the occupation of a few unfortified and unprotected towns, he would begin to understand that a Roman army was not always either victorious or the reverse, according as it was ably or feebly commanded. He

would know that Crassus was a sexagenarian and may have heard that he had never yet shown himself a soldier or even a soldier. Perhaps he almost doubted whether the proconsul had any real intention of pressing the contest to a decision, and might not rather be expected, when he had entrenched himself and his troops with Mesopotamian plunder, to withdraw his garrisons across the Euphrates. Under these circumstances, Orodes, in the early spring, sent an embassy to the Roman camp, with a message which was well calculated to stir to action the most sluggish and poor-spirited of commanders. "If the war," said his envoys, "was really waged by Rome, it must be fought out to the bitter end. But if, as they had good reason to believe, it was, against the wishes of their country, had attacked Parthia and seized her territory for his own private gain, Arsaces would be more calm. He would have pity on the advanced years of the proconsul and would give the Romans back those men of theirs, who were not so much keeping watch in Mesopotamia as having watch kept on them." Crassus, stung with the taunt, made the answer which was the boast of the pride that goes before a fall. "He would give the ambassadors a response in their capital." Vologeses, the chief envoy, prepared for some such exploit as this, of feigning not glad to heap taunt on taunt, opened striking the palm of one hand with the finger of the other. "Hairs will grow here, Crassus, before you see Seleucia."

Soon after this, before the winter could well be said to be over, the campaign was opened against the Roman garrisons and adherents in Mesopotamia. The towns

occupied were attacked by the Parthians in force, and though it does not seem that any of them were recovered, yet all of them were mentioned, and all suffered considerably. The remnant of the defenders made their escape from the scene of terror and brought to the Roman camp an exaggerated account of the difficulties of Parthian warfare. "The enemy," they said, "were so rapid in their movements that it was impossible either to overtake them when they fled or to escape them when they pursued. Their arrows sped faster than sight could follow, and penetrated every kind of defence. Wherever mailed horsemen had to encounter shafts that would pierce through any armour, and armour that defied the thrust of every weapon." Considerable alarm was excited by these rumours, an alarm which was reflected in the reports of considerable length coming from the imperial staff; and the proconsul had by this time made up his mind that something must be risked, and that he could not face the storm of ridicule that would meet him at Rome, if he did not fight at least one great battle.

A second campaign was therefore resolved upon, but it was remained to determine the line of march. Armenia had been already rejected partly as too mountainous and involving an unnecessary waste of time, and partly as implying the desertion, or the sacrifice, of the troops which to the number of eight thousand had been left in Mesopotamia the year before. Crassus felt bound to support his garrisons, and so to make Mesopotamia, and not Armenia, the basis of his operations. But there were several lines of route through Mesopotamia. In the first place there was the

line best known to the Greeks and through them best known to the Romans—that of the Euphrates—which had been pursued by Cyrus the Younger on the expedition against his brother wherein he had been accompanied by the Ten Thousand. Along this line water would be plentiful, forage and other supplies might be counted on to a certain extent, and the advancing army, resting its right upon the river could not be surrounded. Another was that which Alexander had taken against Darius Codomannus—the line along the foot of the Mons Masius (Karajah Dagh), by Edessa and Nicibis to Nineveh. Here too, water and supplies would have been readily procurable, and by clinging to the skirts of the hills the Roman infantry would have been able to set the Parthian cavalry at defiance. Between these two extreme courses to the right and to the left were numerous slightly divergent lines across the Mesopotamian plain, all of them shorter than either of the two above-mentioned routes, and none offering any great advantage over the remainder.

The original motive of Crassus seems to have been to follow in the track of the Ten Thousand. He crossed the Euphrates at Zeugma (Bir or Birehjek, in about latitude 37°) at the head of seven legions, four thousand cavalry, and an equal number of slingers and archers, and at first began his march along the river bank. No enemy appeared in sight, and his scouts brought him word that there was none to be seen for a long distance in front, the only traces that appeared were numerous tracks of horses in rapid retreat before the advancing squadrons. The news

was considered to be good, and the soldiers marched forward cheerfully. The second station was [illegible], but presently Abgarus, the Osrhoenian sheikh made his appearance, and had a conference with the proconsul, where he professed the most friendly feelings and strongly recommended an entire change of tactics. "The Parthians," he said, "were not intending to make a stand; they would do so later, when the king had collected all his forces; but at present they were demoralised and were thinking only of quitting Mesopotamia, and flying with their treasures to the remote regions of Hyrcania and Scythia. The king was already far away; the main host was in full retreat; only a rearguard under a couple of generals, Surenas and Silliaces, was being raised in Mesopotamia, and might be a rather strong detachment. Crassus should give up his cautious proceedings and hurry on at his best speed; he would then probably succeed in overtaking, and cutting to pieces the rearguard of the great army, a flying multitude encumbered with baggage, which would furnish a rich spoil to the victors." The crafty Osrhoenian was believed; and though Cassius with some other officers is said to have still counselled a more cautious advance, the proconsul resigned himself up to the guidance of "the Bedouin," and altering the direction of the march in accordance with his recommendations. Accordingly, he turned off from the Euphrates and proceeded eastward over the swelling hills and dry gravelly plains of Upper Mesopotamia.

Here we shall leave him for the present, while we consider the real disposition of his forces which the

Parthian monarch had made to meet the impending attack. He had already stood come to terms with Mithridates, who had the province of Osrhoene and the north of the Syrian Arabs and had engaged especially to secure the friendship of the former against his assailant. He had further considered the various possibilities of the campaign, and come to the conclusion that it would be best to avoid battle if possible, while by skilful letting Artavasdes in the mountain fastnesses of his own country to commit the task of meeting and coping with the Romans to a general of approved talents. It was of the greatest possible importance to prevent the Armenians from collecting a force with the Romans and strengthening them to that arm in which they were especially lacking, the cavalry. Previous to the short and unsuccessful campaign by the Parthian monarch in person would have prevented Artavasdes from calling him a portion of his troops to act in Mesopotamia. And no doubt it was true that Orodes had great confidence in his generals, whom he may even have felt to be a better commander than himself. Such was as we must call him since his personal appellation has not come down to us was in all respects a person of the highest consideration. He was the second man in the kingdom for both wealth and reputation. In courage and ability he exceeded all his countrymen, and he had the physical advantages of commanding height and great personal beauty. When he went to battle, he was accompanied by a train of a thousand camels, which carried his baggage, and the concubines in attendance on him required for their conveyance as

many as two hundred chariots. A thousand mailed cataphracts, and a still larger number of light armed cavalry, formed his body guard. At the coronation of a Parthian monarch, it was his hereditary right to place the diadem on the brow of the new sovereign. When Orodes was driven into banishment, it was he who had brought him back to Parthia in triumph. When Seleucia revolted, it was he who at the head had first mounted the breach and struck terror into the defenders that took the city. Though less than thirty years of age when he was appointed commander, he was believed to possess, besides these various qualifications, consummate prudence and sagacity.

The force which Orodes committed to his brave and skilful lieutenant consisted entirely of horse. This was not the ordinary character of a Parthian army, which often comprised four or five times as many cavalry as infantry. Whether it was to any extent the result of his own selection and military insight, is uncertain. Perhaps fortunate accident rather than profound calculation brought about the sole employment against the Romans of the cavalry arm. Horse would be worse than useless in the rugged mountain tracts of Armenia, while they would act with effect in the comparatively open and level Mesopotamian region. Fortune, on the other hand, were extended to the Armenian war, and perhaps the king thought that he needed as many as he could collect. In this case he would naturally take with him the whole of the infantry and leave the general his troops which were not required for his own operations. It certainly does not appear, that Surenas was allowed any choice in the matter.

The Parthian horse, like the Persian, was of two kinds, standing in every respect in close relation to the other. The basis of their cavalry was of the lightest and most mobile description. Their unarmoured horsemen, with scarcely any caparison but a head-stall and a single rein, were mounted by riders who, by long training and practice, had become perfect masters of their steeds, and armed with nothing but a strong bow and a quiver full of arrows. A trained, hardened, and practised Parthian, beginning in early boyhood and continued through youth to middle life, must almost grow with his steed, and be able to use his weapons with ease and effect whether his horse was standing still or at full gallop, whether he was advancing towards or hurriedly retreating from his enemy. His supply of missiles was practically inexhaustible, since when he found his quiver empty he had only to retire a short distance and replenish his stock from magazines stored on the backs of camels in the rear. It was his ordinary plan to keep constantly in motion, wheeling in the presence of an enemy to gallop backwards and forwards or round and round his square or column, ever charging it, but at a moderate interval, plying it with his keen and barbed shafts, which were driven by a practised hand from a bow of unusual strength. Charges of this sort rarely ever upset the advancing or retreating foe, and inflicted grievous damage upon him, for the most part scarcely anything in return.

But this was not the worst. In addition to these light troops a Parthian army contained always a body of heavy cavalry, armed on an entirely different system. The strong chargers selected for this service were clad almost wholly in mail. Their head

mass chest even their sides and flanks were protected by coats of mail of bronze or iron sewn privately upon leather. Their principal weapons and causes of the same material were helmets of burnished iron. For an offensive weapon they carried a long and strong sword or pike. They formed a serried line of battle, bearing down with great weight on the enemy whom they attacked and standing firm as an iron wall against the charges of the most brave of their foes. A country according to these accounts has been conquered by no other European race and was in the same case the Asiatic race at this period but the Parthian race appears to have been considerably more powerful than the contemporaneous weapon borne by either of these nations.

As compared with these troops the Romans, as Mommsen observes, were the only troops to form both in respect of number and of excellence. That infantry of the most excellent as they were in close combat would not at a short distance with the heavy javelin, or in hand-to-hand combat with the sword, could not withstand any cavalry wholly or nearly to equal to about against them and they found even when they were come to it and to have found an equal or better adversary in the Parthian horse-bowmen. Compared with a force like that of Surenas the Roman army was at a disadvantage strategically, because the enemy commanded the communications, and at a great advantage tactically, because every weapon of close combat must succumb to that which is wielded from a distance unless the struggle becomes an individual one man against man. The concentrated

position on which the whole Roman method of war was based, moreover, the danger in the presence of such an attack, since the closer the ranks of the Roman column the less could the missiles fail to hit their mark. Under ordinary circumstances, where towns have to be defended and difficulties of the ground have to be considered, such a system of operating with mere cavalry against infantry could never be completely carried out, but in the Mesopotamian plain region, where an army was almost like a ship on the high seas, neither encountering an obstacle nor meeting with a basis for strategical positions during many days' march, this mode of warfare was absolutely the very best one that circumstances allowed it to be developed there in all its purity and thereby in all its power. *There* everything combined to put the foreign infantry at a disadvantage against the native cavalry. Where the heavy-armed Roman foot-soldier dragged himself toilsomely over the steppe and perished from hunger, or at most from thirst on a route marked only by water-springs that were far apart and difficult to find, the Parthian horseman, accustomed from childhood to sit on his fleet steed or camel day almost to spend his life in the saddle, easily traversed the desert, whose hardships he had long learned how to lighten, and in case of need to bear. *There* no rest will to mitigate the intolerable heat and to slacken the bow-strings and leathern thongs of the enemy's archers and slingers. *There* in the long train of camp-followers ordinary citizens and tradesmen could not be missed for the camp. Imagination can hardly conceive a situation in which all the military advantages were more on the

one side and all the disadvantages more thoroughly on the other.

The force entrusted by Orodes to Surenas comprised cavalry of both the above described. No estimate is given as of their number, but as they are called "a vast multitude" and "an immense body" we may assume that it was considerable. At any rate it was sufficient to induce him to make a movement in advance to cross the Syrian range and the river Khabour, and take up his position in the country between that stream and the Balik—instead of merely seeking to cover the capital. The presence of the traitor Abgarus in the camp of Crassus became now of the utmost importance to the Parthian commander. Abgarus, by the orders of the Romans and at the head of a body of light horse admirably adapted for outpost service, was allowed, upon his own request, to scour the country in front of the advancing legions, and had thus the means of communicating freely with the Parthian chief. He kept Surenas informed of all the movements and intentions of Crassus, while at the same time he suggested to the Roman such a line of route as suited the views and designs of his adversary. Our chief authority for the details of the expedition, Plutarch, tells us that he led the Roman troops through an arid and intricate desert, across plains without tree or shrub or even grass, where the soil was composed of a light shifting sand which the wind raised into a succession of hillocks that resembled the waves of an interminable sea. The soldiers, he says, fainted with the heat and with the drought, while the audacious Osroenian scoffed at their complaints and reproaches,

making them whether they expected to find the border-tract between Arabia and Assyria a country of cool streams and shady groves of baths and lustres, like their own delicious campania. But our knowledge of the real geographical character of the region through which the march lay makes it impossible for us to accept this account as true. The country between the Euphrates and the Belik is one of alternate hill and plain neither destitute of trees nor very well provided with water. The march through it can have presented no very great difficulties. All that Abgarus could do to serve the Parthian cause was, first to induce Crassus to trust himself to the open country instead of crossing the river to the mountains, and, secondly, to bring him, after a nasty march, and in the full heat of the day, into the presence of the enemy. Both these things he contrived to effect, and Surenas was no doubt very grateful to him. But the notion that the Roman army, after a treacherous desert, and gave it over when it was perishing with weariness, hunger, and thirst, into the hands of its enraged enemy, being in contradiction with the topographical facts, must be regarded as a fiction of Roman apologists, and is one nevertheless consistently maintained by all the classical writers.

It was probably on the third or fourth day after he had quitted the Euphrates that Crassus found himself approaching his enemy. After a hasty and hot march he had approached the banks of the Belik, when his scouts brought him word that they had fallen in with the Parthian army, which was advancing in force and seemingly full of confidence. Abgarus

had recently quitted him on the pretence of doing him some important service, but in reality to range himself on the side of his late friends, the Parthians. His offers were advised to cross the river and defer an engagement till the morrow; but he had no fears. His son Publius, a gallant officer formed in the school of Julius Cæsar, was anxious for the fray, and accordingly the Roman commander gave the order to his troops to take some refreshment as they stood, and then to push forward rapidly. Surenas on his side had taken up a position on wooded and hilly ground which concealed his numbers, and had even, we are told, made his troops cover their arms with cloths and mats, that the glitter might not betray them. But as the Romans drew near, all concealment was cast aside, the signal for battle was given, the clang of the kettle-drums sounded on every side, the squadrons came forward in their brilliant array, and at once (first as if the Parthian army were about to charge the Roman host, which was formed in a hollow square, with the light armed in the middle and with supports of horse among the wheel-less as well as upon the flanks) But if this intention was ever entertained, it was altered almost as soon as formed and the better part was adopted of having at a convenient distance and assailing the legionaries with flight after flight of arrows, discharged without pause and with extraordinary force. The Romans endeavoured to meet this attack by throwing forward their own skirmishers but these were quite unable to cope with the numbers and superior weapons of the enemy, who forced them

almost immediately to retreat and take shelter behind the rear of the cataphracts. These were more exposed to the deadly missiles which pierced the thin shield and breast-plate and greaves, and inflicted the most fearful wounds. More than once the cataphracts dashed forward and sought to close with their assailants but in vain. The Parthian squadrons retired as the Roman infantry advanced, maintaining the distance which they thought best between themselves and their foe, whom they plied with their shafts as incessantly while they fell back as when they rode forward. For a while the Romans maintained the hope that the missiles would at last be all spent, but when they saw that each archer constantly obtained a fresh supply of arrows from the rear this expectation deserted them. It became evident to Crassus under these circumstances that some new movement must be attempted and, as a last resource, he commanded his son Publius when the Parthians were threatening to outflank to take such troops as he thought proper and charge. The brave youth was only too glad to receive the order. Securing the eight cohorts which Cæsar had sent with him from Gaul who numbered a thousand and adding to them three squadrons of horsemen, five hundred archers and a part of the auxiliary spearmen, he advanced at speed against the retreating columns of the enemy. The Parthians retired at first afraid, and left a hasty retreat. Publius followed with all the impetuosity of youth and was soon out of sight of his friends, pressing the flying foe whom he believed to be panic-stricken. But when they had

drawn him on sufficiently they suddenly made a stand, brought their heavy cavalry up against his line, and quickly enveloped him and his detachment with their superior armament. Publius made a desperate resistance. His Gauls crossed the Parthian poles with their hands, and dragged the cumbersome horsemen to the ground; or dismounting, stepped beneath the horses of their opponents and stabbing them in the belly brought steed and rider down upon themselves. Their charges occasionally broke the ranks, and enabled some to make a wall of their shields, but the Parthian archers closed around them, and slew them almost to a man. Of the whole detachment nearly six thousand strong no more than five hundred were taken prisoners, and scarcely a man escaped. The young Crassus might possibly, had he chosen to make the attempt, have forced his way through the enemy to Iehna, a Greek town not far distant; but he preferred to share the fate of his men. Rather than fall alive into the hands of the enemy, he caused his shield-bearer to despatch him, and his example was followed by his principal officers. The victors struck off his head, and elevating it on a pike returned to resume their attack on the main body of the Roman army.

The main army, much relieved by the diminution of the pressure upon them, had awaited patiently for Publius to return in triumph, regarding the battle as well nigh over, and success as certain. After a time the prolonged absence of the young captain aroused suspicions, which grew into alarm when messengers arrived telling of his extreme danger. Crassus,

almost beside himself with anxiety had given the word to advance and the army had moved forward a short distance when the shouts of the returning enemy were heard and the head of the unfortunate Publius was seen displayed aloft while the Parthian squadrons closing in once more renewed the assault on their retreating foes with increased vigour. The mailed horsemen approached close to the legionaries and thrust at them with their long pikes which sometimes transfixed two men at once; while the light-armed, galloping across the Roman front, discharged their unerring arrows over the heads of their own men. The Romans could neither successfully defend themselves nor effectively retaliate: they could neither break the ranks of the horsemen, nor reach the archers. Still time brought some relief. Bowstrings broke, spears were blunted or shattered, arrows began to fail, bows and sinews to relax, and we may be sure that in both parties a most eagerly watched for the cessation of arms which the darkness rendered compulsory.

It was the custom of the Parthians, as of the Persians before them, to halt at a considerable distance from an enemy for fear of a night surprise. Accordingly, as evening closed in, they drew off, having first shouted jeeringly to the Romans that they would grant the general one night in which to bewail his sons, on the morrow they would return and take him prisoner, unless he should prefer the better course of surrendering himself to the mercy of Arsaces. A short breathing space was thus allowed the fugitives who took advantage of it to move towards Carrhæ, leaving

behind them the greater part of their wounded, to the number of four thousand. A small body of horse under the command of Egnatius rescued Cassius about midnight and gave the commander such information as led him to put his men under arms and issue forth to the succour of the fugitives. The Parthians through fear of the forsaken wounded made them no pursuit. The Roman retreat answered to their system of avoiding night combats, and attempted no pursuit till daybreak. Even then they allowed themselves to be delayed by comparatively trivial matters—the capture of the Roman camp, the massacre of the wounded and the slaughter of the numerous stragglers scattered along the line of march—and made no haste to overtake the recreating army. The bulk of the troops were thus enabled to effect their retreat in safety to Carrhæ where having the protection of walls they were at any rate for a time secure.

It might have been expected that the Romans would there have made a stand. The siege of a fortified place by cavalry is ridiculous at all times; and by siege appliances more than a very incomplete battery is [illegible]. And the Parthians were [illegible] ill-fitted against walls. There was, however, moreover that Artavasdes might have been more successful than he was, and, having repaired the Parthian mischief, might be on his way to bring relief to the Romans. But the soldiers were thoroughly disheartened and would not listen to these suggestions. Previous to the [illegible] there had been no expectation of a siege, no preparations had been

made for standing a siege. The Greek inhabitants of the place could not be trusted to exhibit fidelity to a failing cause. Moreover, Armenia was near, and the Parthian system of abstinence from action during the night seemed to render escape tolerably easy. It was resolved, therefore, instead of clinging to the protection of the walls, to issue forth once more and to endeavour by a rapid night march to reach the Armenian hills. The various officers seem to have been allowed to arrange matters each for himself. Cassius took his way towards the Euphrates and succeeded in escaping with five hundred horse. Octavius, with a division which is estimated at five thousand men, reached the outskirts of the hills at a place called Sinnaca, and found himself in comparative security. Crassus misled by his guides, made but poor progress during the night. He had, however, arrived within little more than a mile of Octavius before the enemy who were at Sinnaca, overtook him. Pressed upon by their advancing squadrons, he with his small band of two thousand legionaries and a few horsemen occupied a low hillock, sheltered by a ridge of rising ground with the position of Sinnaca. Here the Parthian host beset him on all sides, and might have been late or captured at once had not Octavius, deserting his place of safety, descended to the aid of his commander. The united seven thousand held their own against the enemy, having the advantage of the ground, and having perhaps in the experience of some days, learnt the weak points of Parthian warfare.

Surena was anxious above all things, to secure the person of the Roman commander. In the first an excessive importance is attached to the proof of success; and there were reasons which made Crassus particularly desirable to his antagonists. He was believed to have originated and exclusively conducted the war against the Parthians by sinister practices of greed. He had refused with the utmost haughtiness all discussion of terms and had insulted the embassy of the Parthians by the declaration that he would treat with them nowhere but at their capital. If he escaped, he would be bound at some future time to repeat his attempt; if he were made a prisoner his fate would be a terrible warning to others. But now as evening approached, it seemed to the Parthians that the prize which he so much coveted was about to elude his grasp. The legions of Armenia would be gained by the Euphrates before night and further pursuit of them would be vain. It remained that he should be met by craft and held in danger of life to obtain by the compromise of fear and to that point all his efforts were henceforth directed. He drew off his troops and left the Romans without further molestation. He allowed some of his prisoners to escape and by their reports having first contrived that they should overhear a conversation among his men to the effect that the terms were the Parthian customary and that it was left to Orodes to come to terms with the Romans. He then, having allowed time for the report of his pacific intentions to spread, rode with a few chiefs towards the Roman camp carrying his bow unstrung and his right hand

struck out, in token of amity. "Let the Roman general," he said, "come forward with an equal number of attendants and confer with me in the open space between the armies on terms of peace." The agent proposed was disinclined to trust these overtures, but the Roman soldiery, though enraged as it was, clamoured and threatened, upon which Crassus yielded and went down to the plain, accompanied by Octavius and a few others. Surena received the proconsul and his staff with apparent honour, and terms were arranged, only with just bitterness, the Parthian chief required that they should be at once reduced to writing. "Since," he said, with pointed allusion to the bad faith of Pompey, "you Romans are not very apt to remember your engagements." A short interval being required for the purpose of drawing up the formal instruments, Crassus and his officers were ordered to mount upon horses then shod by the Parthians, who had no sooner seated the proconsul than they proceeded to hurry him forward with the evident intention of carrying him off to their camp. The Roman officers took the alarm and resisted. Octavius snatched a sword from a Parthian, and killed one of the grooms who were hurrying Crassus away. A blow from behind stretched him on the ground lifeless. A general mêlée followed, and in the confusion Crassus was killed whether by one of his own soldiers with his own consent, or by the hand of a Parthian, is uncertain. The army, learning the fate of their commander with but few exceptions surrendered. Such as sought to escape under cover of the approaching

night were hunted down by the Bedouins who served under the Parthian standard and killed almost to a man. Of the entire force which had crossed the Euphrates consisting of above forty thousand men not more than a fourth returned. One half of the whole number perished. Nearly ten thousand prisoners were settled by the victors near the extreme east of their empire to the fortress of Margiana. Many as bondsmen compelled after the Parthian fashion to perform military service. There they intermarried with native wives, and became submissive Parthian subjects.

Such was the result of this great expedition, the first attempt of the grasping and ambitious Romans, not so much to conquer Parthia as to strike terror into the heart of her people and to degrade them to the condition of obsequious dependants on the will and pleasure of the world's lords. The expedition failed so utterly, not from any want of bravery on the part of the soldiers employed against, nor from any absolute superiority of the Parthians over the Roman ranks, but partly from the unskilfulness of the commander, partly from the inexperience of the Romans in the tactics, in the nature of the Parthian warfare, and from their consequent ignorance of the best manner of meeting it. To attack an enemy whose main strength lies in cavalry with a body of foot soldiers supported by only a small number of horse, must be at all times rash and dangerous. To direct such an attack on the more open part of the country, where cavalry could operate freely, was wantonly to aggravate the peril. After the first disaster, to quit

the protection of walls when it had once been obtained was a piece of reckless folly. Had Crassus taken care to get the support of some of the desert tribes of Armenia, and not or would not help him, and had he then marched, either by the way of the Mons Masius and the Tigris, or along the line of the Euphrates, the issue of his attack might have been different. He might have fought his way to Seleucia and Ctesiphon, as did Trajan, Avidius Cassius, and Septimius Severus, and might have taken and plundered those cities. He would, no doubt, have experienced hindrances in his retreat; but he might not have come off no worse than Trajan, whose Parthian expedition has been generally regarded as rather a feather in his cap, and as augmenting, rather than detracting from, his reputation. But an ignorant and unexperienced commander, venturing on a trial of arms with an enemy of whom he knew little or nothing, in their own country, without supports or allies, and then not even using every precaution suggested by his officers, allowing himself to be deceived by a pretended truce, and marching straight into a net prepared for him, naturally suffered defeat. The credit of the Roman arms does not greatly suffer by the disaster, nor is that of the Parthians greatly enhanced. The latter showed, as they had shown in their wars against the Syro-Macedonians, that their somewhat loose and irregular army was capable of acting with effect against the solid masses and well ordered movements of the best disciplined troops. They acquired by their use of the bow a force like that which the English bowmen obtained at Crecy

and Agincourt. [illegible] throughout Roman history [illegible] that there was at last an equal [illegible] world that could meet them on equal terms and not be worsted in the encounter. They henceforth obtained recognition from the Greco-Roman writers—albeit a grudging and covert recognition—as the Second Power in the world, the admitted rival of Rome, the only one competent upon the earth to the mighty empire which ruled from the banks of the Euphrates to the shores of the Atlantic Ocean.

While the general of King Orodes was thus completely successful against the Romans in Mesopotamia, the king himself had to Armenia of events not [illegible] of almost equal importance, though [illegible] different kind. Instead of waging an interneccine war with Artavasdes, he had come to terms with him and, having [illegible] could [illegible] close all feud between himself to confirm and cement it by uniting his son, Pacorus, in marriage with the sister of the royal Armenian. A series of festivities was in course of being held to celebrate the auspicious event when news arrived of the triumph of Surenas and the fate of Crassus. According to the barbarous [illegible] the head and hand of the unhappy [illegible] the other guests. We are told that at the moment of the messengers' arrival the two sovereigns, with their attendants, were being amused by a [illegible] entertainment. Strolling companies of Greek players were at this time frequent in the East, where they were sure of patronage in the many Greek cities, and [illegible] sometimes found an appreciative audience among the

native Artavasdes, as the most [illegible] of the tragedy, had engaged [illegible] both he and Orodes had a good knowledge of the Greek literature and [illegible] which he had [illegible] composed both historical works and tragedies. The performance had [illegible] that when the messengers arrived, the [illegible] were engaged at the representation of the famous scene in the "Bacchæ" of Euripides where Agave and the bacchants come upon the stage with the mutilated remains of the murdered Pentheus. The head of Crassus was thrown [illegible], and instantly the player who personated Agave seized the bloody trophy and placing it on his thyrsus in lieu of the one that he was carrying paraded it before the delighted spectators while he chanted the well-known lines—

> "From the mountain to the hall
> We cut wood, see, we sing—
> Blessed prey!"

The horrible spectacle was one well suited to please an Eastern audience, and the prolonged plaudits, we may be sure, rang out [illegible] and the entire assemblage felt a keen satisfaction in the performance. It was followed by a proceeding of equal severity, and still more thoroughly Oriental. The Parthians, in derision of the [illegible] which was supposed to have led Crassus to make his attack, had a quantity of good molten gold poured it into his mouth.

Meanwhile Surenas was amusing his victorious troops and seeking to appease the dissatisfied Seleucians by the celebration of a farcical ceremony. He

spread the report that Crassus was not killed but captured; and selecting from among the prisoners one Roman most like him in appearance, he dressed the man in woman's clothes, mounted him upon a horse, and requiring him to assume the name of "Crassus" and "Imperator," conducted him in triumph to the Greek city before him went, mounted on camels, a band arrayed as trumpeters and pipers, the horse rode having purses suspended to them, and the axes of their unlictors being crowned with the bleeding heads of Romans. In the rear followed a troop of Seleucian mimes and singers, ridiculing the effeminacy and cowardice of the prisoners. After this pretentious parade of his prisoners through the streets of the town, Surenas convened a meeting of the Seleucian senate-house, and gravely denounced to them the indecency of the literature which he had found in the Roman tents. The charge it is said was true, but the Seleucians were not greatly impressed by the moral lesson read to them when they remarked the train of concubines that had accompanied Surenas himself to the field, and thought further of the horse and wild warriors, singers and prostitutes, that was commonly to be seen in the rear of a Parthian army.

It might have been expected that the terrible disaster which had befallen the Roman arms and the vast triumph which the Parthians had achieved for themselves would have had extraordinary and far-reaching consequences. No one could have been surprised at the result had been to shake the very foundations of the Roman power in the East, or even to restore to Asia that aggressive attitude towards the

rest of the world which she had held for hundred and fifty years or more. But the completeness of the change produced was far greater than might have been anticipated. Mesopotamia was at once reduced by the Parthians to its extremest limit, Armenia and Armenia was lost to the Romans, and thrown for the time into complete dependence upon Parthia. The whole East was for the extent of control and the Jews always impatient of a foreign yoke, and recently aggrieved by the unprovoked spoliation of their Temple by Crassus, flew to arms. But general movement of the Orient was not yet. It might have been supposed that the Syrians, Phœnicians, Cilicians, Cappadocians, Phrygians, and other Asiatic peoples would promptly seize their Oriental would have seized the opportunity of rising against their Western lords and driving the Romans back upon Europe. It might have been thought that Parthia at least would have immediately assumed the offensive in force, and have made a determined effort to rid herself of neighbours who had proved so troublesome. But through the conjunction of circumstances was most favourable—though not even was Rome paralysed in the East but was close to the point of civil war in the West—yet the time was waiting. Had Mithridates of Pontus or Tigranes of Armenia been living, or had Sertorius been sitting at Parthia's helm, of a more general invasion would probably have been taken of the occasion and Rome might have suffered seriously. But Orodes seems to have been neither ambitious nor a prince of large views; as a consequence, he seized at any rate the next and

all embracing glance which could survey the whole critical horizon, and comprehending the exact character of the situation, see at the same time how to make the most of it. He allowed the opportunity to slip by without hastening to put forth his full strength, or even without making any considerable effort; and the occasion once lost was sure never to return.

If there was a man living at the time who might possibly have taken full advantage of the situation and forced Rome to pay the deserved penalty of her restlessness and aggressiveness it was Surenas. But that chief had lost the favour of his sovereign. There are services which in the East it is dangerous for a subject to render to the head of the state, and Surenas has exceeded the proper measure. The jealousy of Orodes was aroused by the success and reputation of his general, and it was not long before he found an excuse for handing him over to the executioner. Parthia was thus effectually deprived of the services of the ablest commander of approved merit for villages the second in command during the war with Crassus, had in no way distinguished himself in the course of it. This consideration will account for the feebleness of the efforts made in the years 53 and 52 to retaliate on the Romans the damage done in their invasion. When scattered bands only crossed the Euphrates and began the work of plunder and ravage, in which they were speedily disturbed by Parthians who easily drove them back across the river, Rome should have taken advantage of the interval to strengthen her forces in those parts and secure the invulnerability of her frontier. But those who were at

the head of the Roman state, knowing civil war to be imminent, recalled the veteran troops from their provincial commands for the advantage of the national cause.

Hence, when in 50 Orodes had made up his mind to attempt a blow at the great Parthian army under the young prince Pacorus and the officer of experience Surenas, by whom Orodes appears to have been assisted, the Roman provinces were no longer in a position, as Crassus had done, to offer to him a reorganised the broken remnants of the army of Crassus, which he had formed into two weak

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legions. But no reinforcements had reached him and he did not feel justified in taking the open field with his small force, much less in giving battle to the enemy. The Parthians therefore crossed the Euphrates unopposed and swarmed into the rich Syrian territory. The walled towns shut their gates and manned themselves, but the open country was everywhere overrun and a theatre of ravaging warfare and excitement passed through all the Roman provinces in Asia. These provinces were at the time most inadequately supplied with Roman troops owing to the unprecedented calm in Italy. The natives were for the most part disaffected and inclined to hail the

[illegible] brethren and deliverers [illegible]
[illegible] of [illegible] Ambassadors of [illegible]
[illegible] Commissioners [illegible] of [illegible]
[illegible] and [illegible] the Senate con-
cerning [illegible] Orodes [illegible]
[illegible] Orodes and [illegible] Syria [illegible]
[illegible] Cassius [illegible] Parthia [illegible]
[illegible] Crassus [illegible] Mesopotamia [illegible]
[illegible] Cassius [illegible] Parthia [illegible]
[illegible] Mesopotamia [illegible] Cicero marched into Cappa-
docia with the body of his Roman troops and
[illegible] Deiotarus with his Galatians
at the same time [illegible] to the Roman Senate to
[illegible] Cassius [illegible] himself up to
Antioch and [illegible] the Parthian cavalry to pass
him by and [illegible] to proceed beyond the bounds of
Syria into [illegible] But the Parthians seem scarcely
[illegible] understood the straits of their adversaries or
[illegible] been aware of their own advantage. Pro-
bably their [illegible] department was [illegible]
organised. Instead of spreading themselves wide,
ravaging the [illegible] and leaving them to blockade the
[illegible] with [illegible] yet unconquered squadron
[illegible] the enemy in the open country, we find
them engaging in the unprofitable blockade of cities, for
which they were [illegible] unfit, and confining themselves
almost entirely to the narrow valley of the
Orontes. Under these circumstances we are not
[illegible] to care that Cassius having first beaten

them back from Antioch contrived to lead them into an ambush on the banks of the river, and severely handled their troops, even killing the general, Osaces. The Parthians withdrew from the neighbourhood of the Syrian capital after this defeat which must have taken place about the end of September and soon after went into winter quarters in Cyrrhestica, or the part of Syria immediately east of Amanus. Here they remained quietly during the winter months under Prince Pacorus, and it was expected that the war would break out again with fresh fury in the spring, but Bibulus, the new proconsul of Syria, was a wretched general as he was an incapable statesman. Conscious of his military deficiencies, he strove to avert reverses and, by the Parthians themselves and to turn the thoughts of Pacorus in another direction. He suggested to Orniaspates, a Parthian noble with whom he had managed to open a correspondence, that Pacorus would be a more worthy occupant of the throne of the Arsacidæ than his father, and that he would consult well for his own interests, if he were to proclaim the young prince king, and lead the army of Syria against Orodes. Pacorus had already been associated in the government by his father, and his name appears on some of his father's later coins; but this, while stimulating, did not satisfy his ambition. He appears to have lent a ready ear to the whispers of Orniaspates, and to have been on the verge of treason, if not even overstepped the verge of rebellion. There are Parthian coins bearing the head of a beardless youth and the exact set of titles that has become familiar

under Orodes were [illegible] with ample reason assigned [illegible] must have been struck by the [illegible] circumstances which his revolt was [illegible]. But the plot was [illegible]. Orodes, divining the designs cherished by Pacorus, summoned him to his Court [illegible] the plans [illegible] being yet ripe for execution, he felt that there was no other course open to him but to obey. The Parthian squadrons seem to have recrossed the Euphrates in July, B.C. 50. The consent to Rome was past, but the stain was not wiped out from the shield of Roman honour, nor was the reputation of Rome restored in the East. The First Roman War ended after a period of a little more than four years, with the advantage wholly on the side of Parthia, both in respect of glory and of material gain. The laurels lost by Roman defeat had never been recovered, and the acquisition of Armenia by Parthia was a substantial increase of strength.

XI.

SECOND WAR OF PARTHIA WITH ROME.—PARTHIAN INVASION OF SYRIA, PALESTINE, AND ASIA MINOR.

THE end of the first war of Parthia with Rome was promised shortly after the breaking out of the civil contest between Cæsar and Pompey. In this struggle the sympathies of Parthia were on the Pompeian side. Though Pompey had certainly not given the Parthians much reason for regarding him with favour, since he had openly and flagrantly broken the terms of his treaty of 64 with them, yet on the whole they seem certainly to have preferred his cause to that of his great adversary. Perhaps they viewed Cæsar as more bound in honour than Pompey to seek revenge for the death of Crassus, since he had sent a favourite officer, with a contingent of troops, to his aid; or possibly they may simply have felt more fear of his military capacity. Communications certainly took place between Orodes and Pompey in the course of the year B.C. 49 or 48, and the terms of an alliance were discussed between them. Pompey, who was not very scrupulous, or rather patriotic, made the overtures, and desired to know on what terms the Parthian

monarch would lend him effective aid in the war which was on the point of breaking out. The reply of Orodes was to the following effect. "If the Roman leader would deliver into his hands the province of Syria, and make it wholly over to the Parthians, Orodes was willing to conclude an alliance with him and send him help, but not otherwise." It is to the credit of Pompey that he rejected these terms, and, while not above contemplating a foreign alliance against a domestic foe, was unwilling to purchase the assistance he desired at a cost that would have inflicted a serious injury on his country. The rupture of the negotiations produced a great excitement between the two nations, and Orodes went so far as to throw Hortensius, the envoy of Pompey, into prison, as a means of showing vent to his displeasure. Not, however, that Pompey looked upon Orodes as a friend, and soon, a few months after he had fought his great fight and suffered his great defeat, at Pharsalia (August 9, B.C. 48), his thoughts reverted to the powerful Parthian king, and he entertained for some time the idea of seeking refuge at the Court of Ctesiphon. It is even said that he only relinquished the design, and made his disastrous choice of Egypt as a refuge when on the receipt of intelligence that Antioch had declared for his rival, he understood that the route to the Parthian capital was no longer open to him. Otherwise, notwithstanding the persuasions of his friends who thought the risk too great, both for himself and his wife, Cornelia, to be run with prudence the world might have been spared the spectacle of a second Corcyraean shipwreck at the gates

of Rome and demanding recall and reinstatement, at the head of legions recruited in a foreign land and furnished by a foreign enemy. As it was, Roman history was spared this scandal, and at the same time Orodes was spared the awkwardness and outcry of having to elect between repudiating a supplicant, and provoking the hostility of the most powerful barbarian and the greatest general of the age.

The year B.C. 47 saw Caesar in Syria and Asia Minor whither he was drawn by the necessity of crushing the rash schemes of Pharnaces, son of Mithridates of Pontus who thought he saw in the internal quarrels of the Romans an opportunity of reconstituting his father's empire. After the facile victory of Zela the Great Roman can scarcely have avoided debating with himself the question whether he should at once turn his arms against his only other Asiatic enemy and by a movement as rapid as that which had crushed Pharnaces strike a blow against Orodes and so avenge the defeat of Carrhae. But if the idea crossed his mind he dismissed it. The time was not suitable. Too much remained to be done in Africa, in Spain and at home, for so large a matter as a Parthian War to be, for the moment taken in hand. Caesar resolutely averted his gaze from the far East, and deferring the "revenge" to a comparatively remote date kept whatever projects he may have entertained on the subject to himself and was careful while he remained in Asia, to avoid provoking or exasperating by threats or hostile movements, the Power on which the peace of the

East principally depended. It was not until he had brought the Armenian question to an end that he announced his intention of leading an expedition against Parthia to be openly talked about. In 22 four years after Phraates, having put down all his domestic enemies, and arranged matters, as he thought, satisfactorily at Rome, he let it even be passed formally assigning to him the Parthian War, and sent the legions across Armenia on their way to Asia. What plan of campaign he may have contemplated is uncertain. One writer represents him as intending to enter Parthia by way of the Lesser Armenia and to proceed cautiously to try the strength of the Parthians before engaging them in a battle. Another credits him with a plan for crushing overwhelming Parthia and then, proceeding by the way of the Caspian to Scythia, from Scythia invading Germany and after conquering the whole world to return to Italy by the way of Gaul. But neither author seems to have had any trustworthy authority for his statement. The future Dictator would not be likely to have formed any definite scheme; he would have felt the need of being guided by circumstances. Still, there can be no doubt that an expedition under his auspices would have constituted a most serious danger to Parthia, and might have terminated in her subjection to Rome. The military talents of Julius were of the most splendid description, his powers of organisation and consolidation enormous, his prudence and caution equal to his dash and courage. Once launched on a career of conquest in the East, it is impossible to say whether he might not have

carry the Roman eagles, or what could not be thought of as having come to the emperor. But Parthia was saved from the imminent peril without any effort of her own. The beggars of the "Liberators" struck down on the 15th of March, A.D. 44, the only man who could seriously threaten, and with the removal of Julius passed away even from Roman thought for many a year the vision which he had entertained, and which he alone could have accomplished.

In the civil war which followed on the murder of Julius, the Parthians appear to have actively taken a part. The East fell into confusion on the withdrawal of Julius after Zela, and in the course of the troubles a Parthian army crossed into Syria at the call of a certain Caecilius Bassus, a Pompeian adherent who was seeking to obtain for himself something like an independent principality in Syria. The soldiers of Bassus after a while, B.C. 43, went over in a body to Cassius who was in the East collecting troops for his great struggle with Antony and Octavius, and thus a hundred Parthians came into the power of the second triumvir, the "Liberator." On the accidental circumstance he determined to take advantage in order to obtain the possession of a considerable body of troops from Cassius. He therefore presented each of the Parthian soldiers with a sum of money for their immediate wants and dismissed them generously to their homes at the same time seizing the opportunity to send one of his own officers as ambassador to Orodes, with a request for his friendship and alliance. On receiving the ambassador the Parthian monarch seems to have seen in the circumstance that it would be a

wise policy to comply with it. It was for the interest of Parthia that the Roman arms, instead of being directed to Asiatic conquests should be employed for as long a time as possible in intestine strife; and Orodes might well conceive that he was promoting his own advantage by fomenting and encouraging the quarrels which at any rate for the time secured his own empire from attack. He may have hoped also to obtain some accession of territory from the gratitude of Cassius at some future period, since Cassius was at the time Proconsul of Syria and if successful against Octavian and Antony might be expected to change the basis for his province and to make a fresh arrangement of it. At any rate, he complied with Cassius's request, and sent him a body of Parthian horse, which were among the troops engaged at Philippi.

The crushing defeat suffered by the "Liberators" (November 42), was an immediate disappointment to Orodes but as instead of producing a pacification of the Roman world, it only resulted in the strife and general confusion, it cannot be said to have served disadvantageously for his interest. He himself at any rate neglected otherwise. The Roman world seemed to him more divided against itself than ever, and the "self-wrought ruin," which Horace prophesied, seemed absolutely impending. Three rivals held divided sway in the corrupted State, each of them jealous of the other two and anxious for his own aggrandisement. The two chief pretenders to the first place were bitterly hostile, and while the one was detained in Italy by insurrection against his

authority, the other was plunged in luxury and dissipation, enjoying the first transports of a lawless passion at the Egyptian capital. The nations of the East were moreover alienated by the exactions of the proconsul Ventidius who to reward his soldiers and his people had laid upon them a burden that it was scarcely possible for them to bear. The combination of things generally seemed to invite a foreign power to step in and take the opportunity offered by Rome's weakness seriously to crush her power.

Parthia enjoyed also at the time the rare good fortune of having at her disposal the services of a Roman general. Quintus Labienus, the son of Titus, Caesar's legate in Gaul vi. 1-8, had gone over to the Pompeians, having been sent as envoy to Orodes by Brutus and Cassius a little before Pharsalia, had, on learning the severities of the Triumvirs elected to make Parthia his home, and had taken service under the Parthian banner. Though not an officer of much distinction among his countrymen he both thoroughly knew the weak points of their military system, and it might well seem to Orodes that the occasion which thus offered itself ought not to be missed.

Under these circumstances the Parthian monarch, who had never accepted the failure of Pacorus as final, made preparations during the winter of 41-40 for a fresh attack upon the Roman territory. Having collected an imposing force from all parts of his dominions he placed it under the joint command of his son Pacorus and the Roman refugee, Q. Labienus, and sent it across the Euphrates at the first blush of spring, while Antony was still occupied

with a Parthian balance, and Orodes was not at all opposed. Pacorus was appointed himself to the pacification of Italy. Artabazus might perhaps have exhausted the satisfactions of Cleopatra's court or the perils of a Parthian campaign; but when Antony was driven by what seemed to be a sufficient cause to the Euphrates, all the sentiments of a soldier told him that it happened that just at the time messengers reached him from the brother Parthians urging him to hasten to the West and arrest where it was too late the victorious progress of Octavius. With a regretful glance at the attractions of Syria he set out back to Italy, leaving the command of Roman interests in the East to the incompetent hands of his lieutenant Decidius Saxa, who had already alienated the affections of the provincials by his exactions and was about to lose their respect by his disasters. The Parthian hordes thus weakly opposed burst into Syria with irresistible force, rapidly overran the open country between the Euphrates and Antioch and entering the richer valley of the Orontes threatened the great seats of Roman civilization in these parts. Antioch, Apamea and Epiphaneia from Asia submitted like Damascus on the rocky peninsula almost surrounded by the river, they were at first repulsed, but having shortly afterwards obtained Decidius Saxa and his legions in the open fields they received the submission of Apamea and Antioch, which latter city Saxa abandoned at their approach, flying precipitately into Cilicia.

Encouraged by these successes, Labienus and

Pacorus agreed to divide their troops, and to engage severally in two great expeditions. Pacorus undertook to carry the Parthian standard throughout the entire extent of Syria, Phœnicia, and Palestine, while Labienus took upon himself to invade Asia Minor, and see if he could not wrest some of its more fertile regions from the Romans. Both expeditions were crowned with extraordinary success. Pacorus reduced all Syria, and all Phœnicia, except the single city of Tyre, which he was unable to capture for want of a naval force. He then advanced into Palestine, which he found in its normal condition of intestine commotion. Hyrcanus and Antigonus, two princes of the Asmonæan house, uncle and nephew, were rivals for the Jewish crown, and the latter, whom Hyrcanus had driven into exile, was ready to make common cause with the invader, and to be indebted to a rude foreigner for the possession of the kingdom whereto he aspired. He offered Pacorus a thousand talents—nearly a quarter of a million of our money—and five hundred Jewish women if he would espouse his cause, and seat him upon his uncle's throne. The offer was readily embraced, and by the irresistible help of the Parthians a revolution was effected at Jerusalem. Hyrcanus was deposed and mutilated. A new priest-king was set up in the person of Antigonus, the last Asmonæan prince, who reigned at Jerusalem for three years—B.C. 40–37—as a Parthian satrap or *vassal*, the creature and dependant of the great monarchy on the further side of the Euphrates.

Meanwhile, in Asia Minor, Labienus carried all

before him. Decidius Saxa, having once more [illegible] a victory over a Parthian force, was not only defeated, but slain. Pamphylia, Lycia and Caria, the whole south coast-line, were overrun. Stratonicea was besieged, Mylasa and Alabanda were taken. According to some writers, the Parthians even plundered Lydia and Ionia, and were in possession of Asia Minor to the shores of the Hellespont. It may be said that for a full year Western Asia changed masters, the rule and authority of Rome disappeared, and the Parthians were recognised as the dominant power. Under these circumstances, it is perhaps not surprising that Labienus, last but not least, that he affected the style and title of "Imperator," struck coins and placed his own head and name on them, and even added to his ambitious title "Parthicus," which to a Roman ear meant "Conqueror of the Parthians"—a title of honour whereto he had no possible claim.

But the fortune of war now began to turn. In the autumn of B.C. 39, Antony, having patched up his quarrel with Octavius and set out from Italy to resume his command in the East, sent his lieutenant Publius Ventidius, into Asia with orders to act against Labienus and the triumphant Parthians. Ventidius landed unexpectedly on the coast of Asia Minor, and so alarmed Labienus, who happened to have no Parthian troops with him, that the latter fell back hurriedly towards Cilicia, evacuating all the more western provinces, and at the same time sending urgent messages to Pacorus to implore succour. Pacorus despatched a strong body of cavalry to his aid, but these troops, instead of putting themselves

under his command, had the folly to act independently, and the result was, that in a rash attempt to surprise the Roman camp they were defeated by Ventidius, whereupon they fled hastily into Cilicia, leaving Labienus to his fate. The self-styled Imperator, upon this deserted his men and sought safety in flight, but his retreat was soon discovered and he was pursued captured and put to death.

Meanwhile, the Parthians under Pacorus, alarmed at the turn which affairs had taken in Asia Minor, left Antigonus, the Asmonean prince, to manage their interests in Palestine, and concentrated themselves in Northern Syria and Commagene, where they awaited the approach of the Romans. A strong detachment, under a general named Pharnapates, was appointed to guard the "Syrian Gates," a narrow pass over Mount Amanus leading from Cilicia into Syria. Here Ventidius gained another victory. He had sent forward an officer called Pompedius Silo with some cavalry to endeavour to seize this post, and Pompedius had found himself compelled to an engagement with Pharnapates, in which he was on the point of suffering defeat when Ventidius himself who had probably feared for his subordinate's safety appeared on the scene, and turned the scale in favour of the Romans. The detachment under Pharnapates was overpowered, and Pharnapates himself was among the slain. When news of this defeat reached Pacorus, he thought it prudent to retreat, and accordingly withdrew his troops across the Euphrates. This movement he appears to have executed without being molested by Ventidius, who thus recovered

Syria to the Roman power in the year of Rome 717, or early in B.C. 38.

But Parthia was far from ready to relinquish the contest. He had now himself a pretender to the Syrian throne as a just object of attack and Roman territory as a fair field for plunder. He had many allies among the petty princes and chiefs who occupied a semi-independent position on the borders of the Parthian and Roman empires, for example Antiochus King of Commagene, Lysanias tetrarch of Iturea, Malchus, sheikh of the Nabatean Arabs, and others. Moreover Antigonus claimed to be the rightful heir of the Jewish royal house and to stand against the efforts of Herod to which Octavius and Antony had assigned the throne. Parthia therefore might during the remainder of the winter for a first invasion of Syria in the spring, and during the fall earlier than the necessary expedition would be ready to recross the Euphrates. We are told that if he had crossed at the usual point he would have come upon the Romans quite unprepared, the legions being still in their winter quarters, some of them near, and some even of the great cities, east of Taurus. Ventidius, however, was not to be so easily outwitted. He had already learned from the Roman deserters the way in which some valuable time would be lost by Pacorus in collecting his scattered forces. Thus when the Parthians appeared on the right bank of the Euphrates the Roman general was prepared to engage them at once, and both the honour of the first

by a single battle. He had taken care to provide himself with a strong force of slingers, and had entrenched himself on a portion of high ground at some distance from the river. The Parthians, finding their passage of the Euphrates unopposed, and when they fell in with the enemy, seeing him entrenched as though resolved to act only on the defensive, became over bold. They thought the force opposed to them must distrust its own strength, or its own fighting capacity, and would be ready to yield its position without a blow if suddenly and vigorously attacked. According, as on a former occasion, they charged up the hill on which the Roman camp was placed, hoping, as the Moors at Majuba, to take it by mere audacity. But the troops in the camp were held ready, and at the proper moment issued forth, the assailants found themselves in their turn assailed, and fighting at a disadvantage on the slope, were soon driven down the declivity. The battle was continued on the plain below, where the mail-clad horse of the Asiatics made a brave and prolonged resistance; but the slingers galled them severely, and in the midst of the struggle it happened by ill fortune that Pacorus was slain. The result of what is almost invariable in the case of an Oriental army having lost their leader, the soldiers almost everywhere gave way, flight became universal, and the Romans gained a complete victory. The Parthian army fled in two directions. Part made for the bridge of boats by which it had crossed the Euphrates, but was intercepted by the enemy and destroyed. Part turned northwards into Commagene, and there took refuge

with the king Antiochus who refused to surrender them to the demand of Ventidius and no doubt allowed them to return to their own country. It was said that the former event took place on the anniversary of the great disaster of Carrhae and Rome flattered herself that she had at last retrieved that misfortune, having compensated for the loss of her own legions by the destruction of a Roman Parthian army and having by the death of the assassin Pacorus more than avenged the slaughter of Crassus.

Thus terminated the great Parthian invasion of Syria under Labienus and Pacorus, and with it terminated the prospect of any further spread of the Iranian dominion towards the West. When the two great world-powers Rome and Parthia first came into collision, then the hard blow struck by the latter at the annihilation of the army of Crassus was followed up by the assistance of their clients of Persian Syria Palestine, and Asia Minor, when Apamea, Antioch, and Jerusalem fell into their hands, when Decianus Saxa was defeated and slain—Cilicia Pamphylia Lycia, and Caria occupied, Lydia and Ionia ravaged—it seemed as if Rome had met not so much an equal as a superior, as if the power hitherto predominant would be compelled to draw back and retreat while the new power Parthia would make a long step in advance and push her frontier to the Aegean and the Mediterranean. The history of the contest between the East and West between Asia and Europe is a history of reactions. Never more than one of the two continents at another time the other,

is in the ascendant. The time appeared to have come when the Asiatics were once more to recover their own, and to beat back the European aggressor to his proper shores and islands. The triumphs achieved by the Seljukian Turks between the eleventh and the fifteenth centuries would in that case have been anticipated by above a thousand years through the efforts of a kindred and not dissimilar people. But it turned out that the effort now made was premature. While the Parthian warfare was admirably adapted for the national defence on the broad plains of inner Asia, it was ill suited for conquest, and comparatively speaking, ineffective in more contracted and difficult regions. The Parthian military system had not the elasticity of the Roman—it did not in the same way adapt itself to circumstances or admit of the adoption of new arms, or the indefinite expansion of an old one. However loose and seemingly flexible, it was rigid in its uniformity; it never altered; it remained under the thirteenth Arsaces such as it had been under the first, improved in details perhaps but essentially the same system. The Romans on the contrary, were always modifying and improving their system, always learning new combinations, or new manœuvres, or new modes of warfare from their enemies. They met the Parthian tactics of horse-archery, continuous distant missiles, and almost exclusive employment of cavalry, with an increase in the number of their own horse, a larger employment of auxiliary irregulars, and a greater use of the sling. At the same time they learnt to take full advantage of the Parthian inefficiency against walls, and to practise against

them the arts of pretended retreat and ambush. The result was that Parthia found she could make no [illegible] of Roman and having become possessed of [illegible] by the experience of a decade of years, turned with fresh ardour to the dream of Western conquest. She took up, in fact, from this time a new attitude. Hitherto she had been essentially passive. She had laboured constantly to extend herself at the expense of the Bactrians, the Scythians, the Sacæ Massagetæ, and the Armenians. She had proceeded, like Rome from struggle to struggle, from time to time, at increasingly short intervals between her wars, and had always been waiting out for some fresh enemy. Henceforth she became, comparatively speaking, pacific. She was content, for the most part, to maintain her ground. She sought no conquests. Her contact with Rome appears to have turned her into a state of friendly influence over the border kingdom of Armenia, and her hopes were directed to the recovery of that kingdom as a subject province.

The grief of Orodes at the death of Pacorus was something extreme and excessive, even in the emotional East. For many days he would neither eat nor speak, nor sleep; then his sorrow took another turn. He imagined that his son was not dead, he thought that many that he heard or saw were he could do nothing but repeat his name. Every now and then, however, he awoke to a sense of the actual fact, and mourned the death of his favourite with tears. After a while this excessive grief wore itself out, and the aged king began to direct his attention once more to public affairs and to concern himself

self about the succession. Of the thirty sons who still remained to him there was not one who had made himself a name, or was in any way distinguished above the remainder. In the absence therefore, of any personal ground of preference, Orodes, who seems to have regarded himself as possessing a right to nominate the son who should succeed him, thought that the claims of merit were entitled to be considered, and selected as his successor, Phraates, the eldest of the thirty. Not content, however, with nominating him, or perhaps doubtful whether the nomination would be accepted by the Magistanes, he proceeded further to abdicate in his favour whereupon Phraates became actual king. The transaction proved a most unhappy one. Phraates, jealous of some of his brothers, who were the sons of a princess married to Orodes, whereas his own mother was only a concubine, removed them by assassination; and when the act aroused a feeling to express disapproval of the act, added the crime of parricide to that of fratricide by putting to death his aged father. Thus perished Orodes, son of Phraates, the thirteenth Arsacid after a reign of eighteen or twenty years — the most memorable in the Parthian annals. Though scarcely a great king, he carried Parthia to the highest point of her glory, less however by his own personal merits, than by his judicious selection of able officers for the command of his armies. Exceedingly ambitious, he allowed no scruples to interfere with his personal aggrandisement; but, having waded to power through the blood of a father and a brother, maintained himself in power by the sacrifice of his foremost subject.

His affection for his son Pacorus is the most amiable trait in his character and redeems it from the charge, to which it would otherwise be liable, of a complete defect of humanity. Even here, however, he showed a want of balance and moderation, and, by allowing his mind to become unhinged, brought disaster on himself and on those dearest to him. It may have been a just Nemesis that he should die at the hands of one of his sons, but it seems hard that affection for one son should have put him altogether in the power of another.

XII.

EXPEDITION OF MARK ANTONY AGAINST PARTHIA —ITS FAILURE—WAR BETWEEN PARTHIA AND MEDIA.

PHRAATES the son of Orodes, who is generally known as Phraates the Fourth, ascended the Parthian throne in the year B.C. 37. The Roman world was still in the throes of revolution. A mock peace had indeed been patched up between the irreconcilable rivals Octavian and Antony, in the year B.C. 40, by the sacrifice of the fair, the modest, and the discreet Octavia—"a great marvel of a woman" as Plutarch calls her—to the short-lived passion of the roué Triumvir; but dissension had quickly broken out—the bride and bridegroom had quarrelled—and, before the year B.C. 37 was over had parted, never to come together again. Antony and Octavian were once more acknowledged enemies, and felt it necessary to peace before the world between them in order that they might not at once come to blows. Antony betook himself to the eastern portion of the Roman Empire, and renewed his dalliance with his Egyptian mistress. Octavian remained in Italy launching recriminations against his rival, and preparing for the deadly struggle which, we well know, impended. Phraates probably

thought himself safe to attack under the circumstance and felt himself free to indulge his cruel temperament. He was cruel, jealous and bloodthirsty. Not content with having brushed from his path the brothers who stood to the throne, he was scarcely better than a madman when he proceeded to make a clean sweep and kill the remainder of the family. Nor was this all. From the massacre of his own relatives he passed to execution of Parthian nobles who had provoked his jealousy and at last created such a panic among them that numbers of them fled the

COIN OF PHRAATES IV

country and took refuge in the territory west of the Euphrates. Here the courts and cities of the Roman provinces. Among these fugitives was a certain Monaeses, a nobleman of high distinction who appears to have gained more than one military success in the Syrian war of Pacorus. This officer represented to Antony that Phraates had by his tyrannical and sanguinary conduct made himself detested by his subjects, and that a revolt on the part of large numbers could easily be effected. If the Roman would support him, he said, "he was quite willing to

* Suetonius, Aug. 21. Dio Cassius, 49.

invade Parthia and he made no doubt of wresting the greater portion of it from the hands of the tyrant, and of being himself accepted as king. In that case, he would consent to place the crown of the Romans as their hereditary and feudatory; and they might count on his fidelity and gratitude." Antony received Monaeses with ostentatious generosity and affecting confidence of an Artaxerxes towards a Themistocles, made him a present of three cities of Asia, Larissa, Arethusa, and Rambyce or Hierapolis. The Parthian monarch, amazed at the prospect sought to withdraw his traitor as subject from the enemy's handsbut he by the offer of pardon and renewed favour, and Monaeses, after duly balancing the proposals made to him one against the other, came to the conclusion that his home prospects were the more promising. He therefore returned to Antony that he might probably do him better service as a friend at the court of Phraates than as a prisoner in his own, and asked permission to accept the overtures which he had received and to return to his native country. It is probable that the Imperator was clever enough to see through his motives and to understand that his dependence was to be placed on his protestations but it fitted in with his own interests to amuse Phraates for a short time longer with pacific professions, and he saw in the request of Monaeses an opportunity for throwing dust in the eyes of a not very far-sighted barbarian. Monaeses thus obtained permission to rejoin his sovereign and was instructed to assure him that the Roman commander desired peace as much as possible and was ready that the

standards captured by the Parthians in the war with Crassus and Ventidius and such of the prisoners taken as still survived, should be handed over to the Romans.

But while thus playing with his adversary and deceiving him with fond expectations the Imperator had fully made up his own mind to plunge into war and was leaving no stone unturned to perfect his preparations. It is very unlikely that it had required the overtures of a Monaeses to put a Parthian expedition into his thoughts. The successes of his own lieutenants must have been stimulants of far greater efficacy. C. Sosius, as governor of Syria, had pursued several martial exploits on the frontiers of that province. Canidius Crassus had restored the Armenians with their Albanian and Iberian allies, and had once more planted the Roman standards at the foot of the Caucasus. Above all, the great glory of Ventidius who had (as we have seen) much coveted honour of a triumph at Rome on account of his defeats of the Parthians in Cilicia and Syria must have rankled in his mind and have moved him to emulation and caused him to cast about for some means of outshining his lieutenants and exalting his own military reputation above that of his subordinates. Nothing, he well knew, could be so effectual for this purpose as a successful Parthian expedition—the infliction upon this detested foe of an unmistakable humiliation and the restoring to them of terms of peace on their own soil after some great and decisive victory. Nor did this now appear a very difficult task. After the successes of Ventidius and Canidius Crassus the prestige of the

Parthian name was gone. The legionaries could be trusted to meet them without any undue alarm and to contend with them in the usual Roman fashion, without excitement or flurry. Time had shown the weaknesses as well as the strength of the Parthian military system and the Roman tacticians had succeeded in devising expedients by which its strong points might be met and triumphed over. With the forces at his command Antony might well expect to attain Parthia successfully and not merely to avoid the fate of Crassus, but to obtain important advantages.

At the same time he had his eyes open to all the possibilities of the military situation, and was making his preparations with the greatest patience and secrecy. He collected Roman troops from every available quarter, and gradually raised his legions to the number of sixteen, or according to some of eighteen. These he disposed in the different cities of Asia and did not begin to mass them until he had no further need for concealment. He had brought with him from Europe Gallic and Iberian horse to the number of ten thousand, his Roman infantry is reckoned at sixty thousand, and the cavalry and infantry of the Asiatic allies amounted to thirty thousand. The Armenian contingent, Artavasdes, was secretly won over in the course of the winter, and promised a contingent of seven thousand foot and six thousand horse. Thus the entire number of all arms on which he could count to begin the campaign was 113,000.

Antony was in no hurry to begin. More lover than soldier, he was glad to defer the hour for parting

with the men by whose character it was fascinated, and whose gifts, to a great extent, had won for the barbarians a life in the field. Thus it was not until the midsummer of 36 B.C. that he could bring himself to divorce his mistress to her Egyptian home, and place himself at the head of his legions. It was his right intention to cross the Euphrates into Mesopotamia, and to advance, as Parthia by the direct route, as Crassus had done; but, on reaching the banks of the Euphrates possibly at Zeugma, he found a attitude of defence assumed by the enemy on his own frontier so imposing that he abandoned his first design, and turning northward ordered Armenia resolved to attack Parthia, in conjunction with his Armenian ally from that quarter. Artavasdes gladly welcomed him, and recommended that he should begin the war, not by invading Parthia itself but by an attack on the dominions of a Parthian feudatory, the King of Media Atropatene whose territories adjoined Armenia on the south-east. The king he said was absent, having been summoned to join his overlord on the banks of the Euphrates and having marched away with his best troops to the rendezvous. His territory, therefore, would be ill defended and open to ravage: it was even possible that Praaspa his capital, might be an easy prey. The prospect tempted Antony and he put himself at the disposition of Artavasdes. Dividing his army into two parts, and ordering Oppius Statianus, one of his best officers to follow him towards with the more unwieldy portion of the troops, the siege-batteries, and the baggage-train, he

himself proceeded by forced marches to Praaspa, under the guidance of Artabazus, accompanied by all the cavalry and infantry of the better sort. This town was situated at the distance of nearly three hundred miles from the Armenian frontier; but the way to it lay through well-cultivated plains, where food and water were abundant. Not by accomplished the march without any difficulty, and sat himself down before the place. But the want of his siege-engines and battering train caused him to make little impression, and he was compelled to have recourse to the long and tedious process of raising up a mound against the walls. For some time he cherished the hope that Statianus would arrive to his relief, but this reason was ere long dispelled. News arrived that the Parthian monarch having been made acquainted with his plans and proceedings had thrown on the footsteps of his army, and come up with Statianus, and made a successful onslaught on his detachment. Ten thousand Romans were killed in the engagement, many prisoners were taken, all the baggage waggons and engines of war fell into the enemy's hands, and Statianus himself was among the slain. A further and more severe result followed. The Armenian monarch was elated and emboldened by the defeat that, regarding the Roman cause as desperate, he retired from the contest drew off his troops and left Antony to his own resources.

The situation became now one of great difficulty. Autumn was approaching; supplies were failing apace, the siege-works which Antony had attempted made no progress, and it was impossible to construct

a fresh battering ram to replace that which had been taken. If Antony could only capture the town before the winter set in he would find himself on safety, and, having a breathing space during which he might repair his losses, would be able to recruit himself for another campaign. He therefore made desperate efforts to overcome the resistance offered by the besieged and to obtain possession of the city. But all was in vain. The walls were too strong and too high. His mound was never brought on a level with the monument. From time to time the defenders made sallies, drove off the workmen, and inflicted serious damage on his constructions. The Parthian monarch, hovering about in the neighbourhood, pushed with scarcely less unavailing energy and contented himself with hindering, by his sorties and attacks, the foraging parties. Efforts made by Antony to bring on a general engagement by means of a foraging expedition on a large scale failed, the Parthians retreating, as soon as they had sufficiently exhibited their marvellous power of getting out of an enemy's reach almost without suffering any loss. The Roman commander, as the winter drew near, came to the conclusion that he must withdraw from the siege and retire into Armenia; but before making the complete sacrifice as a last resource, he resolved to pass once more to terms of accommodation. He would at once relinquish the siege, and restore the standards if Phraates would only withdraw to beyond the Euphrates and release the Roman captives and standards. The demand was preposterous, and the Parthians simply laughed at it, feeling

that it was for Antony rather to purchase an unmolested retreat than for themselves to pay him for retiring. Each day that he lingered placed him in a worse position, and made it more certain that he could not escape serious disaster.

At last the equinox arrived, and retreat became imperative. There were two roads by which it would be possible to reach the Araxes at the usual point of passage. One lay to the left through a plain and pastoral country, probably along the course of the Jaghatu and the eastern shores of Lake Urumiyeh, which is the route that an army would now-a-days take; the other, which was shorter but more difficult, lay to the right, leading across a mountain tract, but one fairly supplied with water and in which there were a number of inhabited villages. The Trumpeter was informed by his scouts that the Parthians had occupied the easier route in the expectation that he would select it, and were hopeful of overwhelming his entire force with their cavalry in the plains. He therefore took the road to the right, through a rugged and mountainous country—probably that between Lakhti Sufiman and Tabriz—and, guided by a Mardian who was well acquainted with the district, set out to make his way back to the Araxes. His decision took the Parthians by surprise, and for two whole days he was unmolested. By the third day, however, they had thrown themselves across his path. Antony, expecting no interference, was pursuing his march in a somewhat disorderly manner when the Mardian guide perceiving signs of recent injury to the route, gave him warning that the enemy could not be far off and the

Roman general had just time to make his troops form in battle array and bring his light armed and slingers to the front, when the Parthian horsemen made their appearance on all sides and began a fierce assault. But the Roman light troops, especially those armed with slings and darts, made a very serious resistance, the leaden missiles of the slingers being found particularly effective, and, after a short combat, the Parthians, following their usual tactics, drew off, only however to return again and again, while at last Antony's Gallic cavalry found an opportunity of charging them, when they broke and fled hastily, having received a serious check, from which they did not recover during the remainder of the day.

However, on the day following they reappeared, and thenceforth for nineteen consecutive days they disputed with Antony every inch of his road, and inflicted on him the most grievous losses. "The sufferings of the Roman army during this time," says a modern historian of Rome, "were unparalleled in their military annals. The intense cold, the blinding snow and driving sleet, the want sometimes of provisions, sometimes of water, the use of poisonous herbs, and the harassing attacks of the enemy's cavalry and bowmen, which could only be repelled by maintaining the dense array of the phalanx or the tortoise, reduced the retreating army by one third of its numbers. Much gallantry was shown especially by some of the officers, as Flavius Gallus, and Antony himself displayed all the finest qualities of a commander except judgment, but every effort was in vain as the Roman army continued to dwindle in numbers, that

of the Parthians increased as the strength of the invalid soldiers failed through scarcity or unwholesomeness of food, the courage and audacity of their adversaries were augmented, the Roman losses grew greater from day to day, and at last culminated in one occasion of extreme disaster when eight thousand men were placed *hors de combat* three thousand of them, including Gallus, being slain. At length, after a march of 300 Roman, or 277 British miles, the survivors reached the river Araxes, probably at the Julfa ferry, and, crossing it, found themselves in Armenia. But the calamities of the return were not yet ended. Although it had been arranged with Artavasdes that the bulk of the Roman army should winter in Armenia, yet, before the various detachments could reach the quarters assigned them in different parts of the country, eight thousand more had perished, through the effect of pestiferous air or the severity of the Armenian winter. Altogether, out of the fifteen thousand men whom Antony had taken with him into Media Atropatene in the midsummer of B.C. 36, less than seventy thousand returned to commence the campaign of the ensuing year. Well may the unfortunate commander have exclaimed during the later portion of his march, as he computed his own heavy losses with the light ones suffered by Xenophon and his Greeks in these same regions "O, these Ten Thousand! those Ten Thousand!"

On the withdrawal of Antony into Armenia, a quarrel broke out between Phraates and his Median vassal. The latter complained that he was wronged

in the division made of the Roman spoils, and expressed himself with so much freedom as seemed to offend his superiors. Perceiving this, he became alarmed lest Phraates should punish his boldness by deposing him from his office and setting up another satrap in his place. He thought it necessary therefore to seek out for some powerful support, and on carefully considering the political situation, came to the conclusion that his best hope lay in making a friend of his late foe Antony and placing himself under Roman protection. Antony was known to have been deeply insulted by the conduct of his Armenian ally in the late campaign, and to be desirous of taking vengeance on him. He had already made an attempt to get possession of his person, which had failed through the suspiciousness and caution of the wary Oriental. Hostilities between Armenia and Rome were evidently impending and must break out at no distant time. It would be clearly for Antony's interest, when war broke out, to have a friend on the Armenian border and especially one who was strong in cavalry and bowmen. The Median monarch therefore sent an embassy of rank to Alexandria, where Antony was passing the winter, and lightly proposed an alliance. Antony readily accepted the offer. He was intensely angry with the conduct of his late co-triumvir, and resolved on punishing his disobedience and desertion. He viewed the Median alliance as of the utmost importance, not only as against Armenia, but still more in connection with the long-wished-for enterprise of invading Parthia itself, and he saw in the Atropatenian ruler

a prince who might be well worth his while to bring to his cause personally. He therefore enhanced the overtures made to him with gifts, and even rewarded the messenger who had brought them with a principality. After sundry efforts to entice Artavasdes into his power which occupied him during the greater part of the year 33, but which were unsuccessful, in the spring of B.C. 34 he suddenly made his appearance in Armenia. His army which had remained there from the previous campaign, held all the most important positions, and as he professed the most friendly feelings towards Artavasdes even proposing an alliance between their families that prince after some hesitation, at length ventured into his presence. He was immediately seized and put in chains. Armenia was rapidly overrun. Artaxes the eldest son of Artavasdes whom the Armenians made king in the room of his father was defeated and forced to take refuge with the Parthians. Antony then arranged a marriage between a daughter of the Median monarch and his own eldest son Alexander, and leaving garrisons in Armenia to hold it as a conquered country carried off Artavasdes, together with a rich booty into Egypt.

Phraates during these transactions had remained wholly upon the defensive. He was not a man of much enterprise and probably thought that a waiting policy was under the circumstances the best one. It cannot have been long before he began to regret Artavasdes' downfall, and doubtless he must have been grateful to Octavius for having warned him against being overreached by the stratagems of Antony.

them to detest Rome even more than they detested Parthia. But while the Roman troops held possession both of Syria and of Armenia, and the alliance between Rome and Media Atropatene continued, he could not venture to take any aggressive step or think of doing more than protecting his own frontier. Almost any other Roman commander than Antony would, after crushing Armenia, have at once carried the war, in conjunction with his Median ally, into Parthia, and have not ceased to strike a blow that might avenge the defeat of Crassus. Phraates naturally expected an invasion of his territories both in B.C. 34 after Antony's occupation of Armenia, and in the following year when he again appeared in those parts, and advanced to the Araxes. But Antony's attention was so much engrossed by the proceedings of his rival, Octavian, in the West, and it was so clear to him that the great contest for the mastership of the Roman world could not be delayed much longer, that Eastern affairs had almost ceased to interest him, and his chief desire was to be quit of them. The object of his advance to the Araxes in B.C. 33 was to place things in such a position that his presence might be no longer necessary. It seemed to him that the interests of Rome would be sufficiently safeguarded, if the Median alliance were assured, and he therefore sought an interview with the Atropatenian king, and concluded a treaty with him. The terms were very favourable to the Mede. He received a body of Roman heavy infantry in exchange for a detachment of his own light horsemen. His dominions were consequently enlarged by the cession of Armenia, and the

marriage previously arranged between his daughter, Iotapa, and Antony's son, Alexander, was accomplished. Antony then marched away to meet his Roman rival, flattering himself that he had secured, at any rate for some years, the tranquility of the Asiatic continent.

But Phraates now saw his opportunity. In conjunction with Artaxias, he attacked the Median king and, though at first repulsed by the valour of the Roman troops in the Median service, succeeded, after Antony had withdrawn them to reform his standard, in inflicting on him a severe defeat, and even making him a prisoner. This success led to another Artaxias, having now only the Roman garrisons to contend with, re-entered and recovered Armenia. The Roman garrisons were put to the sword. Armenia became once more wholly independent of Rome, and it is probable that Media Atropatené returned to the Parthian allegiance.

The result of the expedition of Antony was thus rather to elevate Parthia than to repress her. Antony, notwithstanding his undoubted courage, at once clearly saw that he should refrain from a direct encounter with the full force of the Parthian kingdom. Hence his avoidance of any invasion of Parthian territory, and the employment of his efforts to the injuring of his enemy by striking at her through her dependencies, Media and Armenia. Nor was the timorous thus exhibited compensated for by success in the comparatively small enterprises to which he confined himself. The expedition against Media Atropatené was a complete failure, and terminated in the loss of forty thousand

men. The Armenian campaign succeeded at the time, but it alienated Artavasdes, and it was of the utmost importance to conciliate him at a moment when Rome suffered fresh disasters, and when Parthia threatened to plunge Armenia once more into that chaos from which she had just been drawn painfully. On the retirement of Antony to the East, Parthia occupied a ground of position as had never been held before, except during the brief space of Crassus's career. Pacorus and Labienus

XIII.

INTERNAL TROUBLES IN ARTHA—HER RELATIONS WITH ROME UNDER AUGUSTUS AND TIBERIUS.

PHRAATES, justly proud of his successes against Antony, and of the re-establishment of his authority over Media Atropatene, regarded, not without reason, his position in Parthia as thereby absolutely secured; proceeded to indulge the natural cruelty of his disposition, and resumed the harsh and tyrannical treatment of his subjects, by which he had made himself odious in the early years of his reign.[1] So far can the power of opposition to evil be paralysed by the overwhelming sense of its hopelessness, that no attempt was made to resist his authority, which compelled him to fly the country. B.C. 34. The revolt was headed by a certain Tiridates, a Parthian noble, who, upon its success was established, by the usual means, Phraates fled into Scythia, and applied to the Scythian king for assistance. He returned ready for war and gathered the hordes with which he had crossed the Jaxartes in large numbers, but succeeded with no such dispatch in restoring the exiled monarch to the throne from which his subjects had deposed him. The latter fled at their approach and,

[1] See above, p. 204.

having contrived to carry off to his flight the youngest son of Phraates, presented himself before Octavian, who was in Syria at the time of his return from Egypt, surrendered the young prince into his hands, and requested his aid against the tyrant. Octavian accepted the valuable hostage but, with his usual caution declined to pledge himself to furnish any help to the pretender, he might remain, he said, in Syria if he so wished, and while he continued under Roman protection a suitable provision should be made for his support but he must not expect to be

COIN OF PHRAATES IV.

replaced upon the Parthian throne by the Roman arms. Some years later (in 23) Phraates on his turn made application to the Emperor for the surrender of the persons of Tiridates and the restoration of his wife and son but the application was only partially successful. Octavian said he would restore to him his son and wife but not even for a ransom that the surrender of the former was a difficult matter to arrange that he could not possibly consent to. Where would be the honour of Rome if such a thing were done? Phraates would, no doubt, feel that the return was due on account of his son. No acceptable return

would be the delivery to the Romans of the standards and captives taken from Crassus and Antony. The Parthian monarch made no direct reply to this suggestion. He gladly received his son, but ignored the rest of the message. It was not until three years later, when Octavian (now become Augustus) visited the East in person, that the probable alternative of war seemed to deliberate that the Parthian monarch brought himself to relinquish the trophies which were as much prized by the victors as by the vanquished. The act was one so unpatriotic as to be scarcely pardonable, but we must remember that Phraates held his crown by a very insecure tenure. He was extremely unpopular with his subjects, and Augustus had it in his power at any moment to produce a pretender, who had once occupied, and with Roman help might easily have asserted for a second time, the throne of the Arsacids.

The remaining years of Phraates—and he reigned for nearly twenty years after restoring the standards—were almost unbroken by any event of importance. The result of the twenty years' struggle between Rome and Parthia had been to impress either nation with a wholesome fear of the other. Both had triumphed on their own ground, both had failed when they ventured on sending expeditions into their enemy's territory. Each now stood on its guard, watching the movements of its adversary across the Euphrates. Both had become pacific. It is a well-known fact that Augustus left it as a principle of policy to his successors that the Roman territory had reached its proper limits, and could not with any ad-

vantage be extended further. This principle, followed with the utmost strictness by Tiberius was accepted as a rule by all the earlier Cæsars, and only regarded by them as admitting of rare and slight exceptions. Trajan was the first who a hundred and thirty years after the accession of Augustus, made a rent in it, and set it at defiance. With him reawoke the spirit of conquest, the aspiration after universal dominion. But in the meantime there was peace; peace not indeed absolutely unbroken, for border wars occurred, and Rome was sometimes tempted to interfere by arms in the internal quarrels of her neighbour, but a general state of peace and amity prevailed, neither state making any great attempt on the other's dominions, no change occurred in the frontier, no great battle tested the relative strength of the two peoples. Such rivalry as still continued was exhibited less in arms than in diplomacy, and showed itself mainly in endeavours on either side to obtain a predominance in influence in Armenia. There alone, during the century and a half that intervened between Antony and Trajan, did the interests of Rome and Parthia come into collision, and in connection with this kingdom war was three times during those years waged between the two empires.

After Phraates had yielded to Augustus in the important matter of the standards, the peace he appears for many years to have steadily cultivated by assiduous courtesy. In the interval between 20 and 8 B.C., having occasion to demand the services of his subjects towards Rome and to suggest that they might not impossibly depose him and place one of his sons

...n the Parthian throne, he resolved to send these ... out of the country; and on this occasion he paid Augustus the compliment of selecting Rome for his children's residence. The youths were four in number—Vonones, who was the eldest, Seraspadanes, Phraates, and Phraates—two of them were married and had children. They reached Rome during the remainder of their mother's absence, and were treated as became their rank, being supported at the palace charge, and in a magnificent manner. The Roman writers speak of them as "hostages" given by Phraates to the Roman Emperor; but this was certainly not the intention of the Parthian monarch, and it was scarcely possible that the idea could be entertained by the Romans at the time of their residence.

The friendly relations thus established between Phraates and Augustus would probably have continued undisturbed until the death of the one or the other, had not a new object of contest in Armenia ... which tempted the Parthian king beyond his powers of resistance. On the death of Artaxias, in the year ... 20, Augustus, who was then in the East, had sent Tiberius into Armenia to arrange the affairs of the ... and Tiberius had thought it best to place upon the throne a brother of Artaxias named Tigranes. Parthia had made no objection to this arrangement, but had, early, asserted the Roman supremacy over the Armenian realm. Fourteen years afterwards, in B.C. 7, Tigranes died, and the Armenians, without

* Vell. Paterculus, Suetonius, Tacitus, Justin, Eutropius, Orosius, &c.

waiting to know the pleasure of the Roman Emperor, conferred the sovereignty on his three sons whom their father had previously designated for the royal office by associating them with him in the government. But this was a liberty which Augustus could not possibly allow. He therefore, in B.C. 5, sent an expedition into Armenia, deposed the three sons of Tigranes, and established in the kingdom a certain Artavasdes, whose birth, rank, and claims to the royal position are unknown. But the Armenians were dissatisfied and re-asserted. After exercising the rule of Rome's nominee for the short space of three years, they rose in revolt against him, treated the Romans who endeavoured to support his authority, and drove him out of the kingdom. Whether Tigranes was placed upon the throne at all, at the same time, Parthia was resolved to give the Armenians their protection, in case Rome should again interfere with the course of the nation. Phraates could not bring himself to reject the Armenian overtures. Ever since the time of the second Mithridates it had been a settled principle of Parthian policy that Armenia should be dependent on herself, and even at the cost of a rupture with Rome, it seemed to Phraates that he must not depart from the appeal made to him. The rupture might not come. Augustus was now advanced in years, and might submit to the indignity offered him without resenting it. He had lately lost the services of his best general—his stepson Tiberius—who, in consequence of the slights put upon him, had gone into retirement at Rhodes. He had no one that he could entrust with an army but his grandsons, youths who

had not yet finished their marketing. Phraates probably hoped that, under such circumstances, Augustus would draw back before the prospect of a [illegible] but would allow, without remonstrance, at any rate, without resistance, the passage of Armenia into the position of a Parthian subject-ally.

But if such were his expectations he was greatly mistaken. Augustus had as keen a sense of what the honour of Rome required now that he was an old man of sixty as when he was a youth of twenty. From the time that he first heard of the Armenian outbreak, and of the support that it had from Parthia, he appears never to have wavered in his determination to reassert the Roman claim to a paramount controlling influence over Armenia, but only to have hesitated as to the steps to be taken and as to when it would be best to employ force in the business. Like a natural question of time also to his mind as to the fittest person for such a work—a work in which diplomatic and military ability might be both of them almost equally required—but Tiberius had recently taken offence at certain steps which he supposed himself to have received and had withdrawn from the public service and from social life altogether. In default of his services and wishing to spare Augustus the necessity of falling back upon his grandsons, but the eldest of these, Gaius, was now in the year B.C. 2 no more than eighteen years of age and the policy of employing a young man in so difficult and important a business could not but appear to him extremely questionable. Augustus therefore hesitated, and it was not until late in the year that he published

Caius to the East with ample duty to settle the Parthian [illegible]

Meanwhile, however, a change had occurred in Parthia. [illegible] somewhat advanced in life, but married [illegible] Indeed, Augustus and Musa, who had been sent to Armenia as a present by Augustus, and was [illegible] to him from this moment, who, as [illegible] to have an influence over the Parthian state. It was [illegible] the influence [illegible] Musa that Phraates was induced to send his four sons to Rome there to receive their education. At any rate, there [illegible] soon [illegible] Phraates, with whom the book can [illegible] the youth, became his father's sole support in his declining years, came to look upon himself as [illegible] Lydia as his natural successor, of the weakness of his claim to the throne and country, but [illegible] with regard to him by events to [illegible] Italian origin, the [illegible] with which he became [illegible] his future appointment with his [illegible] admiration of [illegible] past monarch, from the [illegible] of [illegible] Phraates then vowed to [illegible] and [illegible] with her [illegible] to [illegible] the [illegible] of Caius" and "Goddess Julia" [illegible] upon the reverse of most of his coins.

Among the [illegible] Phraates's [illegible] was the sending of an embassy to Augustus [illegible] to profess its regard [illegible] to [illegible] though he must have known that the Parthian attitude towards

Armenia had already [illegible]. He informed Augustus of his accession to the throne of the Arsacidæ, apologised for the circumstances under which it had taken place, and proposed a renewal of the treaty of peace which had subsisted between Augustus and his father, adding a request that the Roman Emperor would confer the [illegible] on the person already surrendered to him by the Parthians whom he had sent to Rome, but [illegible]. With respect to Armenia he observed that [illegible] Augustus to [illegible] to secure the *status quo*. [illegible] of extreme [illegible] by his

COIN OF PHRAATES IV AND MUSA

base name without adding the title of king, he respected both, and made the usual appellation which he had so arrogantly and unwarrantably assumed, and at the same time to evacuate all the positions of Armenia [illegible] which he had unjustly occupied. With respect to the surrender of the Parthian princes the brothers of Phraates and their families, he said nothing. Nor did he return to the appeal of Tiberius in the formal [illegible] of a treaty of peace. He left Phraates to [illegible] his brothers were detained at Rome as pretenders to the throne of Parthia, whom it might be convenient at some future time to bring

forward, and he was not obscurely intimated that no treaty of peace would be concluded until the Parthian troops were withdrawn across the Armenian frontier. Phraates, however, was not to be cowed by mere words. He reviled Augustus in his own coin, sending him a contemptuous message in which while assuming to himself the high sounding Oriental designation of "King of Kings," he curtly addressed the Roman Emperor as "Caesar."

It is probable that this attitude of defiance would not have been maintained, and that the Parthian troops would have withdrawn from Armenia, had Augustus remained from active measures, and been content with menaces. But when, in fact, the Emperor proceeded from words to acts, and despatched his grandson, Gaius, to the East at the head of a large force, with orders to re-establish the Roman influence in Armenia even at the cost of a Parthian war, and when Gaius showed himself in Syria with all the magnificent surroundings of the Imperial dignity, Phraates became alarmed. It was arranged during the winter that an interview should be held between the two princes in the spring of A.D. 1, on an island in the Euphrates, where the terms of an arrangement between the two empires should be discussed and settled. For the first and almost the last time a Parthian monarch and a member of the Roman Imperial House met amicably for the purpose of negotiation, and discussed the terms on which the two empires could be friends. On either banks of the "great river" were drawn up the mighty hosts which within a few days, if an agreement were come to, would be loosed at

each other's throats. The two chiefs are attended by an equal number of attendants, passed from their respective banks to the island, and there in the full sight of both armies proceeded to hold the conference. An arrangement satisfactory to both sides was made, the chief proviso of which was the evacuation of Armenia by the Parthians. Feasting and banqueting followed. The Parthian king was first entertained by Caius on the Roman side of the river, after which Caius was in his turn feasted by the Parthian on the opposite bank. Cordial relations were established. For once in the course of the long struggle with Rome Parthia seems to have actually made up her mind to relinquish Armenia to her adversary. She gave up her claim, withdrew her troops, and during the serious troubles which followed (troubles which Caius most unfortunately abstained from utilizing for the benefit either by siege or arms in Armenian affairs, and allowed Rome to settle them at her pleasure.

The willingness of Phraates thus to efface himself and concede to Rome the foremost position in Asia arose primarily from the unsettled state of the kingdom, and the internal difficulties which threatened him to be a parricide was not in Parthia an absolute bar to popularity and a quiet reign as had been proved by the prosperous reign of Phraates IV. but there were circumstances connected with the recent palace revolution which threw special discredit upon the principle agent in it and greatly relieved the pride of the Parthian nobles. Private and selfish motives could alone actuate the young prince who could not even pretend that public good led to the extreme step that

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] to [illegible], and [illegible] was sent out to Asia [illegible] with many presents to occupy a [illegible] that the world had to offer.

It is said that princes are always popular on their [illegible]. Valentinian was no exception to the general rule. His subjects received him with every demonstration of joy, pleased like children with a new plaything. But the sense of [illegible] soon disappeared. The foreign training of the young monarch soon showed itself. Bred up at Rome amid the luxuries and refinements of Western civilisation, the rough speech and coarse manners of his countrymen displeased and disgusted him. He took no pleasure in horses, seldom appeared in the military dress, disliked the rude exercises which formed a marked feature of the martial manners also, which he showed himself in public, was unusually reserved, unaware. He had brought with him from the place of his exile a number of Greek companions, whom the Barbarian despised and hated. The manner which he showed these outward marks of his contempt and rage. It was to no purpose that he sought to conciliate us angry subjects by the splendour and affability of his demeanour or by the readiness with which he gave access to [illegible]. Virtues and graces unknown to the rude Germans were in their eyes the qualities of a coward. Unlike [illegible] of the [illegible] who [illegible] with a certain tact even in the part which they had taken in raising [illegible] to the throne, [illegible] had never forgiven

ruled. They said "Arsakes, for a king who belonged to another world, and into whom there had been introduced a foreign and hostile education. All the glory gained by destroying Crassus and repressing Antony was utterly lost, for Armenia and Media were to be ruled by Greeks henceforward, and the throne of the Arsacids to be treated as if it were a Roman province. It would have been bad enough to have had a prince imposed upon them by the will of a superior if they had been conquered, it was worse, in a respects worse to suffer such an insult when they had not even had war made upon them." Under

COIN OF TIRIDATES I.

the influence of these feelings the Parthians after they had endured Vonones for a few years rose in great numbers and about A.D. 12 summoned Artabanus an Arsacid who had grown to manhood among the Dahae of the Caspian region but was at that time ruling a part of Media Atropatene to rule over them.

Vonones, when it is offered to him after fifteen years, though a few crowns may also quite happily in the museum of that kingship has not to grant it, and Artabanus on receiving the overture from the Parthian nobles at once assembled his followers to

accept the proffered dignity. He advanced Parthia at the head of an army consisting of his own subjects, and engaged Vonones in which, at his approach, the bulk of the Parthian people had ranged. The engagement resulted in the defeat of the Median monarch, and Vonones was so proud of his victory that he immediately had a coin struck to commemorate it, bearing on the obverse his own head with the legend ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ ΟΝΩΝΙΣ, and on the reverse a Victory with the legend ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ ΟΝΩΝΙΣ ΝΙΚΗΣΑΣ ΑΡΤΑΒΑΝΟΝ—King Vonones on his defeat

COIN OF ARTABANUS III.

of Artabanus." But the congratulation was premature. Artabanus had made good his retreat to his own country, and having there collected a larger army than before returned to the attack. The two hosts encountered, the forces of Vonones were defeated, and a band of escaping from the battle with a few followers fled in confusion to Seleucia, while his rival, following up his advantage, pressed upon the Medes and inflicted great losses. Artabanus, entering Ctesiphon in triumph, was immediately crowned king. Vonones took refuge in Armenia, on the throne happening to

be vacant; was not only given an asylum, but appointed to the kingship. Artabanus naturally remonstrated, and threatened war unless Vonones were surrendered to him. Armenia was alarmed and began to waver; whereupon Vonones withdrew himself from the country, and sought the protection of Creticus Silanus, the Roman governor of Syria, who received him with favour, gave him a guard, and allowed him the state and title of king, but at the same time kept him in a sort of honourable captivity.

It was under these circumstances that the Roman Emperor Tiberius, who had recently succeeded Augustus, [illegible] to entrust the [illegible] and [illegible] of the [illegible] considerable [illegible] the [illegible] of the [illegible] and committed their settlement at once [illegible] by [illegible] and [illegible]. It may be that in his selection of [illegible] he was actuated by [illegible] and by the [illegible] to separate [illegible] which [illegible] an army which had [illegible] But [illegible] seems [illegible] to [illegible] upon [illegible] and it is difficult to see what better choice than he made was open to him under the circumstances of the case. Germanicus was, at the time, the second person in the State. He had [illegible] he [illegible] a good [illegible] and general, [illegible] At once the [illegible]

[illegible], he would [illegible] to the Orientals to shine with a [illegible], but was [illegible] see in him the [illegible] of the great Western monarchies would be [illegible] by the [illegible] of his position, which [illegible] by the charm of his personality. [illegible] to assert these [illegible] Libertas conducted on his representative [illegible] of the ordinary and well-worn [illegible] Roman administrative employment but [illegible] from a [illegible] unknown [illegible] office [illegible], [illegible] to keep him with an extraordinary [illegible] over [illegible] the Roman [illegible] of the Levantine [illegible]. Full powers were [illegible] him for the [illegible] of leaving [illegible], of [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

tions maintained and secretary done to soothe the feelings and gratify the wishes of [illegible] the nominal Asiatic nations. There was a Armenia which had grown up a foreign prince named Zeno, the son of Polemo, once king of the so-called Pontus, and afterwards of the Lesser Armenia, who was in very good repute among the Armenians, since he had, during a long residence, conformed himself in all respects to their habits and usages. Feeling that it would please the Armenians, Germanicus determined on giving them this man for ruler, and at the seat of government, Artaxata, in the presence of a vast multitude of the people and with the consent and approval of the principal nobles, he placed with his own hand the diadem on the brow of the favored prince, and saluted him as king under the Armenian name, which he had never hitherto borne, of "Artaxias." For the satisfaction of the Parthian monarch, who required that Vonones should either be delivered into his hands or removed to a greater distance from the Parthian frontier, he "relegated" the unhappy prince to the Cilician city of Pompeiopolis—a change of residence so much to his liking by the prince himself that the next year he endeavoured to escape from it, but his attempt being discovered he was pursued, overtaken, and slain in a skirmish on the banks of the river Pyramus. The pacification of the East was thus, with some difficulty, effected; and Germanicus, quitting Asia, indulged himself in the luxury of a pleasure trip to Egypt.

The [illegible] which Germanicus had made sufficed to preserve the tranquillity of the East for the

space of fifteen years. Artabanus, at peace with Rome and with Armenia, employed the time in the chastisement of border-tribes and in petty wars which however increased his reputation. Success followed on success, and by degrees his opinion of his own military capacity was so much raised that he began to look upon a rupture with Rome as rather to be desired than dreaded. He knew that Germanicus was dead; that Tiberius was advanced in years, and not likely to engage in any distant military expedition; also that the Last was under the rule of an official who had never yet distinguished himself as a commander. When, therefore, in A.D. 34, the Armenian throne was made vacant by the death of Artaxias III. the nominee of Germanicus he boldly occupied the country, and claiming the disposal of the vacant dignity bestowed it upon his own eldest son Arsaces who bore the name of Arsaces. Nor did he rest content with this. Insult must be added to injury. Ambassadors were despatched to Rome with a demand for the restoration of the treasure which Vonones had carried off from Parthia and taken with him into Roman territory; and a threat was held out that Artabanus was about to reoccupy all the territory which, having been once Macedonian or Persian, was now properly his since he was the natural successor and representative of Cyrus and Alexander. According to one writer,* the Parthian monarch actually commenced military operations against Rome by the invasion of Cappadocia, which had been for some time a Roman province.

* Dio Cassius.

It is uncertain what [illegible] would have made [illegible] and [illegible] the internal [illegible] of Parthia been sound and satisfactory. He was [illegible] averse to war at this period of his life, and [illegible] sent instructions to Vitellius [illegible] governor of Syria, after the [illegible] of Armenia by [illegible], that he was to cultivate friendly [illegible] with Parthia. But the Parthian kingdom was [illegible] conspiracy; [illegible] and the nobles were in active correspondence with the [illegible] court on the [illegible] of [illegible] a [illegible] they [illegible], [illegible] put to death [illegible] of the royal family who were in his power [illegible] against an Arsacid [illegible], but [illegible] would not [illegible] the [illegible] the [illegible] one of the [illegible] sons of [illegible] IV [illegible] the intended [illegible] to [illegible] [illegible] Phraates [illegible] father was [illegible] and [illegible] at Rome [illegible] Tiberius [illegible] were once seen on the banks of the Euphrates [illegible] guaranteed a [illegible] from the throne [illegible] was [illegible] upon [illegible] for his [illegible] and sent him into [illegible] kingdom.

Phraates, however, was unequal to the task assigned him. The [illegible] change in his life and habits, which [illegible] bring

[illegible] beheaded, and he was at last arrived in Syria after having [illegible] journey by [illegible], named Tachos, probably a son-in-law of Khnemibis, at Memphis, and succeeded to several of the satrapies of the east in the struggles of a mind content [illegible] and fertile in resources. At his instigation, Pharnabazus, king of Bithynia, a portion of the [illegible] Greeks, was induced to take the field and invade Armenia, which [illegible] by Persian [illegible]. Ariobarzanes by [illegible], he secured [illegible] Lesbos by the [illegible] Mytilene, Autophradates [illegible] by [illegible] the [illegible] affairs in Asia Minor, Chabrias, [illegible] with all speed to maintain the [illegible] the disputed provinces. But Greece [illegible] for his assistance [illegible] with [illegible] variety of [illegible] and [illegible] with the [illegible] Thus [illegible] the [illegible] of his [illegible] the Athenians [illegible] the passes of the Cimmerian [illegible] a number of the Scythian or Sarmatian [illegible] who were always ready when [illegible] to take a part in the quarrels of the south. Greeks failed to [illegible] these mercenaries, and had [illegible] with the three [illegible] who had joined Pharnabazus [illegible] him. For [illegible] he [illegible], the word [illegible] but it was impossible [illegible] troops, whom he [illegible] and disciplined. After a while he was [illegible] the battle which Pharnabazus necessarily [illegible]. The troops at his

Imperial cavalry, a body of cavalry which Pharasmanes had brought his horsemen and a small host of infantry. The conflict was nevertheless long and furious, the Parthians and Sarmatians were very equally matched, and the victory might have been doubtful if it had not happened that in a hand-to-hand combat between the two commanders Vitellius was struck to the ground by his antagonist and thought by most of his own side to be killed. As usual in battles with centaurs in the East, a rout followed. If we are to believe Josephus, "many tens of thousands" were slain. Armenia was wholly lost to Parthia, and Artabanus found himself left with diminished resources and tarnished reputation to meet the intrigues of two powerful foes.

Still, he would not succumb without an effort. In the spring of A.D. 36, having cowed the wild tribes of the empire he took the field in person and marched northwards, with the intention of avenging himself on the Iberian and recovering his lost province. But his first efforts were unsuccessful, and before he could renew them the Roman general, Vitellius, put himself at the head of his legions, and moving towards the Euphrates threatened Mesopotamia with invasion. Placed thus between two dangers, the Parthian monarch felt that he had no choice but to abandon Armenia and return to the defence of his own proper territories, which in his absence must have lain temptingly open to an invader. His return caused Vitellius to change his tactics. Instead of challenging Artabanus to an engagement, and letting the quarrel be decided by a trial of strength in the

open field he fell back on the weapons of intrigue so dear to his master, and procured by a lavish expenditure of money to excite dissatisfaction once more among the Parthian grandees. This time the conspiracy was successful. The military disasters of the last two years had alienated from Artabanus the affections of those whom his previous cruelties had failed to disgust or alarm, and he found himself without any armed force whereon he could rely, beyond a small number of the foreign guards whom he had formed about his person. It seemed to him that his only safety was in flight, and accordingly he quitted his capital, and removed himself hastily to Hyrcania, in the immediate vicinity of the Scythian Dahæ, among whom he had been brought up. Here the population was friendly to him, and he lived a retired life, waiting for the time until the Parthians, who could make an absent prince with fairness, although they could not long continue faithful to a present one, should repent of their behaviour to him.

When the flight of Artabanus became known to the Romans, Vitellius immediately advanced to the banks of the Euphrates, and introduced Tiridates into his kingdom. Fortunate omens were said to have accompanied the passage of the river, and these were followed by auspicious the importance of which was not overlooked. Ornospades, satrap of Mesopotamia, and a former comrade of Tiberius in the Dalmatic war, was the first to join the standard of the pretender with a large body of horse. Next came Sinnaces, who had long been in correspondence with the Romans, with a contingent, from his father, Abdi-

gesses—"the pivot of the party," as Tacitus calls him—and the keeper of the royal treasures, together with other persons of high position. Vitellius on receiving the pretender thus warmly welcomed by his countrymen, reported his mission as accomplished, and returned with his troops into Syria. Tiridates proceeded through Mesopotamia and Assyria, receiving on his way the submission of many Greek and some Parthian cities, as Hatra and Artemita. The Greeks saw in his Roman breeding a guarantee of the politeness and refinement which had been wholly wanting in Artabanus brought up among the uncultured Scytas. In the great city of Seleucia he was received with an obsequiousness that bordered on adulation. Besides paying him all the customary royal honours, both old and new, they flatteringly compared him with his predecessor, who, they said, had been no true Arsacid. Tiridates was pleased to reward these unseemly compliments by a modification of the Seleucian constitution in a democratic sense. From Seleucia he crossed the Tigris to Ctesiphon, where, after a short delay, caused by the absence of some important governors of provinces, he was crowned King of Parthia according to the established forms by the Surena, or Commander-in-chief of the period.

Tiridates thought that now all was secure. Artabanus was holding in Hyrcania, calmly, a miserable existence. The whole of the western provinces had declared for him, and no signs of hostility appeared in the East. He deemed his rule acquiesced in generally, and there is reason to suppose that his

anticipations would have proved correct, had not discontent shown itself at the Court and among the higher officials. There had been many who had hoped for the office of Grand Vizier, and in nominating one to it Tiridates had displeased all the rest. There were also many who, through account or hesitation in making up their minds had been absent from the coronation ceremonial and who believed themselves to be on that account suspected of disaffection, or at any rate of lukewarmness. It is also more than probable that the "Roman breeding" of the new monarch, which delighted his Grecian, offended his Parthian subjects. At any rate, however we may account for it dissatisfaction certainly broke out himself from the nobles sought the dethroned monarch in his obscure retirement, and placed before him the prospect of a restoration, which they declared themselves anxious to bring about. Distrustful at first of what seemed to him mere levity and fickleness Artabanus was ultimately persuaded that the overtures made to him were sincere, and that if he himself were not the object of any very devoted affection on the part of the malcontents, Tiridates at any rate was the object of a very real and pronounced hostility. He therefore placed himself in the hands of the conspirators, and having first secured the services of a body of Dahæ and other Scythe, marched westward with all speed, anxious at once to cut short the preparations which were being made to resist him by his enemies, and to forestall the desertions which he could not but anticipate on the part of his friends. The great promptitude of this rapid

movement is unquestionable. It startled and greatly discomposed Tiridates and his counsellors. Of these some recommended an immediate attack on the troops of Artaxanus before they were recovered from the fatigues of their long march; while others, and among them Abagarus, the chief vizier, advised a retreat into Mesopotamia, and a junction with the Armenian levies, and with the Roman troops, which Vitellius, on the first news of the insurrection, had thrown across the Euphrates. The more timid counsel prevailed, and a retreat was determined on. But *reculer pour mieux sauter* is a maxim only suited to the West. In the East the first step in retreat is the first step towards ruin. No sooner was the Tigris crossed and the march through Mesopotamia begun than the host of Tiridates melted away like an iceberg in the Gulf Stream. The Arabs of the Mesopotamian desert were the first to break up and disband themselves, the nearness of their homes offering an irresistible attraction; but their example was soon followed by the rest of the army, which had no such excuse. Some directed their steps homewards, others joined the enemy. Tiridates was at last left with a mere handful of adherents, and hastening into Syria put himself once more under Roman protection.

The attempt to establish the influence of Rome over the Parthian kingdom by fixing a Roman puppet on the throne of the Arsacids, thus proved altogether a failure. But the general effect of the struggle was advantageous to Rome, and reflects credit on the prince who, at the age of seventy-seven, at once un-

dicated the Roman honour and baffled the schemes of one of the ablest of the Parthian monarchs. Artabanus, when after his various vicissitudes he recovered his throne, had no longer any stomach for great enterprises. He took no further steps to disturb Mithridates in his possession of Armenia, and he left Vitellius unmolested on the Euphrates. When, towards the close of A.D. 36 or very early in A.D. 37, he had an interview with the Roman proconsul halfway between the two banks of the river he distinctly renounced all claims to the Armenian kingdom, at the same time agreeing to send one of his sons Darius to Rome in a position which Rome regarded as that of a hostage and further consenting to offer incense to the emblems of Roman sovereignty—an act, as the Romans understood it, of submission and homage. Artabanus, by these concessions, the meaning of which he did not perhaps fully understand, decidedly lowered the prestige of his nation, and yielded to Rome a pre-eminence which was scarcely admitted by any other monarch, or at any other period. We cannot be surprised that the credit of concluding such a peace through belonged really to Tiberius, was falsely claimed by his flatterers for Caligula, the new emperor, soon after whose accession in March, A.D. 37 the news of the successful negotiations reached Rome.

XIV.

ASINAI AND ANILAI—AN EPISODE OF PARTHIAN HISTORY

It was during the troublous reign of Artabanus the Third when the state was distracted between foreign war and domestic feud that events arose in Mesopotamia which have been graphically described by the Jewish writer Josephus, and which serve to throw considerable light on the internal condition of the Parthian Empire at this period. There was a large Jewish element in the population of the more western provinces of the empire, an element which dated from a time anterior to the rise, not only of the Parthian but even of the Persian monarchy. That system of "transplantation of nations" which was pursued on so large a scale by the Assyrian and Babylonian sovereigns of the eighth, seventh, and sixth centuries before Christ, had introduced into the heart of Asia a number of strange nationalities, and among these there was none more remarkable than that of the Hebrews. Whatever had become of the descendants of the Ten Tribes, whether in any places they still constituted distinct communities, or had long ere this been

absorbed into the general population of the country —at any rate, colonies of Jews, dating from the time of Nebuchadnezzar's captivity maintained themselves, often in a flourishing condition, in various parts of Babylonia, Armenia, Media, Mesopotamia, Susiana, and probably in other Parthian provinces. These colonies exhibited very generally the curious but well known tendency of the Jewish race to a rate of increase quite disproportionate to that of the population among which they are placed. The Hebrew element became continually larger and more important in Babylonia, Mesopotamia, and the other adjacent countries, notwithstanding the large drafts which from time to time were made upon it by Seleucus Nicator and others of the Syrian princes. And this alien element in the population, for the most part preserved. The Jewish settlers seem to have enjoyed under the Parthians the same sort of toleration, and the same permission to exercise a species of self-government which both Jews and Christians enjoy now in several parts of Turkey. In many cities they formed a recognised community under their own magistrates; some towns they had wholly to themselves, those who dwelt in Mesopotamia possessed a common treasury, and it was customary for them to send up to Jerusalem from time to time the offerings of the faithful, escorted by a convoy of thirty thousand or forty thousand armed men. The Parthian kings treated them well and probably regarded them as a valuable counterpoise to the dissatisfied Greeks and Syrians of this part of the empire. They laboured

under no disabilities, suffered no oppression, had no grievances of which to complain, and it would have seemed both natural and very unpardonable that they would ever become the cause of trouble or disturbance to the state. But circumstances seemingly trivial threw the whole community into commotion and evil on to disasters of an unusual and lamentable character.

There were two young Jews, named respectively Asinai and Anilai, brothers, natives of Nearda, the city in which the general treasury of the community was established, who, on suffering some ill-usage at the hands of the manufacturer in whose service they were, threw up their employment, and, retiring to a marshy district enclosed between two arms of the Euphrates, made up their minds to exchange the dull career of honest labour for the more exciting one of robbery. The vagabonds of the neighbourhood, by the attraction which draws like to like, soon gathered about them, and a band was formed which in a little time became the terror of the entire vicinity. They exacted a black mail from the peaceable population of Sepharvaim and others who lived near them, occasionally made plundering raids to a distance, and required a contribution from all travellers and merchants who passed through their district. Their proceedings having become notorious and intolerable, the satrap of Babylonia thought it his duty to put them down and marched against them with the troops at his disposal, intending to take them by surprise on the Sabbath day, when it was supposed that their religious scruples would prevent them from

making any resistance. But his intentions got wind, and the robber band, having agreed among themselves to disregard the obligation of the Sabbatical rest, turned the tables upon their assailant and, instead of allowing themselves to be surprised, surprised him, and inflicted on him a severe defeat. Tidings of the affair having reached Artabanus, who had his hands already sufficiently occupied, he thought it best to make pacific overtures to the victors, and, having induced them to pay him a visit at his Court, instead of inflicting any punishment, assigned to Asinai, the elder of the two brothers, the entire government of the Babylonian satrapy. At first the experiment appeared to be a success. Raised from the condition of an outlaw to that of a *satrap*, or Persian provincial governor, Asinai was perfectly content, and administered his province with zeal, energy, and ability. For the space of fifteen years all things went smoothly in Babylonia, and no complaint was raised against the administration. At the end of that time, however, the lawless temper which from the first had characterised the two brothers, re-asserted itself, not however in Asinai, but in Anilai. Having fallen in love with the wife of a Parthian nobleman who seems to have been the commander of the Parthian troops stationed in Babylonia, and not knowing how otherwise to accomplish his purpose, he made an open attack upon the chieftain and killed him. Having thus removed the obstacle to a marriage, he, within a short space made the object of his affections his wife, and having established her as the mistress of his house, vowed her to introduce into it the heathen

rites whereto she had always been accustomed. But this gave great offence to the entire Jewish community, who were shocked that idolatrous practices should be permitted in a Hebrew household, and laid their complaint before Vonones, calling upon him to interfere in the matter and to compel Anilai to divorce his Parthian wife. Abia came to their view, and would probably have enforced them upon her brother, had not the lady, alarmed at her impending disgrace, and it may be, sincerely attached to her Jewish husband, accelerated the accomplishment of the project by secretly poisoning her brother-in-law. On the death of Vonones the authority which he had wielded with so much satisfaction to all concerned, passed, apparently without any fresh appointment by the crown, into Anilai's hands, who thus became satrap of the extensive province of Babylonia, at the time the most important in the empire.

Anilai, however, possessed unfortunately none of his brother's capacity for administration and government. His morals were those of a mere ordinary freebooter, and he was no sooner settled in his province than he proceeded to give them free vent by plundering, without so much as a pretext, the territory of a neighbouring satrap, named Mithridates, who was not only a Parthian noble of the highest rank but was connected with the Royal house, being married to a daughter of Artabanus. Mithridates flew to arms in defence of his province, but Anilai, who had military skill but few other talents, fell suddenly upon his encampment in the night, completely routed his troops, and took Mithridates himself

prisoner. The unhappy captive was subjected to extreme indignity, by the orders of Amytis he was stripped naked, set upon a camel, and in this guise conducted from the battlefield to the camp of the victors, where he was exhibited before the eyes of the soldiery. Not daring, however, to put to death a connection of the Great King, of whose vengeance he had a wholesome dread, Amytis compelled, after a time, the return of his captive and allowed him to return to his satrapy. There the account which he gave of his sufferings so exasperated his wife that she set herself to make his life a burden to him, and never rested until she succeeded in collecting a second army and continuing the war. His forces advanced against Amytis's stronghold, but the Jewish captain was too proud to remain within it. Quitting the marshes, he led his troops a distance of ten miles through a hot and arid plain to meet the enemy, thus foolishly and quite unnecessarily exhausting them, and exposing them to the attack of the enemy under circumstances of the greatest disadvantage. The natural consequence followed. Amytis was defeated with great loss, but he himself escaped, and having enrolled fresh troops of a worthless character, proceeded to revenge himself by carrying fire and sword over the lands of his own Babylonian subjects, whom he must have looked upon as on the point of escaping from his dominion. The unfortunate natives sent to Nearda and required that Amytis should be given up to them, but the Jews of Nearda, even supposing them to have had the will, had not the power to comply. Negotiations were then tried, but with no better

result, except that in the case of them the Babylonians contrived to obtain an exact knowledge of the position which Vonones and his troops occupied, together with a general notion of their habits. Taking advantage of the knowledge thus acquired, they one night fell suddenly upon them, when they were all either drunk or asleep, and at one stroke exterminated the whole band. Such was the end of Anilai.

Up to this point, though the occurrences had been strange and abnormal, indicative of extreme disorganisation and weakness on the part of the Parthian government, yet no very great harm had been done. Two Jewish brothers had been elevated into the position of Persian satraps, and had borne rule over an important province, with the result in the first place of fifty years of peace and prosperity, and subsequently of a short civil war terminating in the destruction of the surviving robber chief and the annihilation of the entire band of marauders. But worse consequences were to follow. The bonds of civil order cannot be relaxed or tested without extreme danger to the whole social edifice. There had long been a smouldering feud between the native Babylonian population and the Jewish colonists in Babylon, which from time to time had broken out into actual riot and commotion. Diverse in race in manners and in religion, the two nationalities were always ready to fly at each other's throats when a fitting occasion offered. The present seemed an occasion not to be missed. Authority was relaxed, the Jewish element in the population of Mesopotamia

was at once disgraced and weakened. It had made itself obnoxious to the dominant power in the state, and was not likely to receive government support or protection. Moved by these considerations, the native Babylonian population, very shortly after the destruction of Antiochus rose up against the Hebrews settled in their midst and threatened them with extermination. Finding themselves unable to make an effectual resistance and receiving no assistance from the government, the Hebrews came to a determination to withdraw from the conflict by retiring altogether from a city where they provoked such hostility and were subjected to such ill usage. Notwithstanding the enormous pecuniary loss which such a migration necessarily entails, and the vast difficulty of finding new homes for a population of many scores of thousands, they quitted Babylon in a body and transferred themselves to Seleucia. Seleucia, originally a Hellenic city, had at this time a tripartite population, consisting of Greeks, Syrians, and Jews. The Greeks and Syrians were opposed to each other, but hitherto the Hebrew element had managed to live on tolerably friendly terms with both the other nationalities. Now however, the new comers felt themselves drawn to the Syrians who were a kindred race, and, uniting with them against the Greeks, forced these last to succumb, and to accept a subordinate position. But such a condition of things could not last; the Greeks found it insupportable; and before many months were past they succeeded in gaining over the Syrians to their side and persuading them to join in an organised attack upon the Hebrews.

Too weak to make head against so powerful a combination, the Hebrews were utterly overpowered, and in the massacre that ensued they lost, it is said above fifty thousand men. Those who escaped crossed the Tigris and transferred their abode to Ctesiphon, but the malice of their enemies was not thus satisfied. The persecution continued, and did not come to an end until the entire Jewish population, deserting the metropolitan cities, withdrew to the smaller provincial towns which had no other inhabitants.

The series of events here related derives its interest partly from its connection with the Jewish people, whose history will always, more or less, command our sympathies, but partly also, and indeed mainly, from the light which it throws on the character of the Parthian race, and the condition of the countries under Parthian government. Once more the resemblance between the Parthian and the Turkish systems is brought vividly to our notice, and the scenes enacted in Syria and the Lebanon before our own eyes—the mutual animosities of Christian and Druse and Maronite, the terrible conflicts, and the bloody massacres that have been an incubus to progress to Turkish administration, present themselves to our thoughts and memories. The picture has the same features of antipathies of race unsoftened by time and contact of perpetual feud bursting out into occasional conflict, of unsparing religious hatreds, of strange combinations of massacres, of fearful outrages, and of a government looking tamely on, and allowing things for the most part to take their course. It is clear that the Parthian system failed utterly to

blend together or amalgamate the conquered races: and not only so, but that it rubbed off some of their angles, rendered them after the lapse of centuries not one whit more friendly, or better disposed one towards another than they had been at the first, did absolutely nothing towards producing the "unity, peace, and concord, which ought to knit together the subjects of a single government, the constituent elements of a single kingdom." Moreover the Parthian system, as set before us in the events which we are considering, was impotent even to effect the first object of civil government the securing of quiet and tranquillity within its borders. If we were bound to regard the events of the Annals and Ancient Books as representing to us truthfully the *normal* condition of the peoples and countries with which it is concerned, and to take the picture as a fair sample of the general condition of the empire, we should be forced to conclude that Parthian government was merely a euphemistic name for anarchy, and that it was a rare good fortune which prevented the State from falling to pieces at this early period within three centuries of its establishment. But, on the whole, there is reason to believe that the reign of Artabanus III puts before us, not the normal, but an exceptional state of things—a state of things which could only arise in Parthia when the machinery of government was deranged in consequence of rebellion and civil war. We have to bear in mind that Artabanus III was actually twice driven from his kingdom, and that during the greater part of his reign he lived in perpetual fear of revolt and insurrection. It is not

at all improbable that the culminating attempt of the struggle which we have described, synchronised with the second expulsion of the Parthian monarch, and are thus not so much a sign of the ordinary weakness of the Parthian rule, as an indication of the terrible strength of the forces which that rule for the most part restrained and held under control.

XV.

END OF THE REIGN OF ARTABANUS III.—GOTARZES AND HIS RIVALS.

ARTABANUS did not continue on the throne very long after his undignified submission to Vitellius. His proceedings probably disgusted his subjects, who vented their indignation in murmurs and threats of revolt. These threats coming to the knowledge of the king, provoked him to adopt severe measures against the malcontents, who thereupon banded themselves together, and from malcontents became open conspirators. Artabanus felt himself unequal to the task of coping with the movement, and, quitting his capital, fled to the Court of Izates, tributary king of Adiabene, who received him hospitably and undertook to reinstate him upon the throne from which he had been driven. It has an interest to this portion of Parthian history to learn from Josephus, who relates it that Izates and his mother Helena, were converts to Judaism, and entertained so much affection for the Jewish people as to send supplies of corn to Jerusalem, when (about A.D. 44) that city was threatened with famine.[1] Meanwhile,

[1] Compare Acts xi. 28.

however, the Parthian Magnates had deposed Artabanus, and erected in his place a certain Kamnaskires or Cinnamus, and that a relative of the exiled monarch brought up by him in his house. War would probably have broken out had not Cinnamus, who was of a gentle disposition, waived his claim in favour of his benefactor and written to him inviting him to return. Artabanus upon this remounted his throne, whereupon Cinnamus carried his magnanimity so far as to take the diadem from his own head, and replacing it on that of the old monarch, to salute him as king. It was a condition of the restoration guaranteed to both by Artabanus and Izates that the transactions should be accompanied by a complete amnesty for all political offences. Such instances very unusual among the Parthians may perhaps be ascribed to the gentle counsels of the Judaean Izates.

It seems that Artabanus died very shortly after his restoration to the throne. His last days were clouded by the calamity of the revolt of Seleucia, far the most important of the Hellenic cities of the empire. We may assume that the disturbed condition of the Parthian kingdom, the frequent revolts, the occasional civil wars, the manifest tendency to disruption which the empire about this time showed, had raised among the Hellenic subjects of the Parthian crown, always dissatisfied, a belief or at any rate a hope that they might succeed in shaking off the yoke of these barbarian lords. Seleucia naturally took the lead. Had she succeeded in establishing her independence, other lesser towns, as Apollonia, Nicephorium, Dessa Carthe, might

have followed her example. Rome might have been called in as a protector, and might perhaps have undertaken the charge. An *imperium in imperio* might conceivably have been established. But, as the event proved, the attempt now made was ill judged. Though Artabanus himself failed to recover the revolted city, which maintained a precarious independence for the space of over six years, A.D. 45-50, yet there was at no time any reasonable prospect of a prosperous issue. Rome held proof. The unhappy Greeks were overmatched. Though Parthia was thought to have incurred some disgrace by her inability to reduce a single rebel city to subjection for the space of nearly seven years, yet ultimately she prevailed. Seleucia succumbed to a son of Artabanus in A.D. 46, and resumed a subject position under Parthian masters.

On the death of Artabanus, the succession was disputed between two of his sons, Vardanes and Gotarzes. According to Josephus, the crown was left by his father to the former, who was probably the elder of the two; but, as he happened to be at a distance, while Gotarzes was present in the capital, or close at hand, the last named had the opportunity of occupying the throne, and, being an ambitious prince, availed himself of it. He reigned, however, at this time only for a few weeks. Having put to death a brother, named Artabanus, together with his wife and son, and otherwise shown a tyrannical disposition, he so alarmed his subjects that they sent hurriedly for Vardanes, and offered him the post of

[1] Tacit. "Ann." xi. 9. "Non sine fedecie Parthorum."

king. Vardanes a man of prompt action instantly complied, and having accomplished a journey of 350 miles in two days drove Gotarzes from the kingdom; after which he received the submission of the provinces and cities generally, the only exception being Seleucia which maintained its revolt, and resisted all his efforts to reduce it. Meantime Gotarzes had fled to the Dahæ of the Caspian region and thrown himself upon their support and protection. The Dahæ, who were not Parthian subjects, willingly gave him an asylum, and from this secure retreat he proceeded to seduce the neighbouring Hyrcanians from their

COIN OF VARDANES I.

allegiance to his brother, and drew together so large a power that Vardanes felt himself under the necessity of raising the siege of Seleucia and marching in person to the distant East. The two armies encountered each other in the plain country of Hyrcania, but before they came to an engagement, the commanders on either side thought it expedient to hold a conference, and arrange if possible, terms of peace. It had come to the knowledge of Gotarzes, that there was a design afloat among the chief nobles of either army to get rid of both the brothers, and elect to the

throne a wholly new king. Having informed his brother of this alarming discovery, he succeeded in arranging a secret meeting with him where pledges were interchanged, and an understanding come to with respect to the future. Gotarzes agreed to relinquish his claims to the Parthian crown, and was assigned a residence in Hyrcania, which was probably made over to his government. Vardanes returned to the West, and resuming his siege operations, finally compelled Seleucia to a surrender in the year A.D. 46, the seventh year of the insurrection.

Regarding himself now as firmly settled in his kingdom, and as having nothing more to fear from his brother, Vardanes thought that the time was come for taking in hand a new and important enterprise. This was no less than the recovery of Armenia from the Roman influence. That country, reduced to vassalage by Artabanus III in A.D. 37, and placed by Rome under the government of Mithridates, an Iberian, had suffered various vicissitudes, and was now A.D. 46 extremely discontented with its ruler, as well as with his Roman patrons and upholders. Vardanes thought that there would be great difficulty in driving out Mithridates from the kingdom upon which he had so weak a hold, and regaining Armenia within the sphere of the Parthian rule and influence. But for success in such an enterprise he required the hearty concurrence and support of his principal feudatories, and especially of the great Median house whose services to Artabanus had been rewarded by an important enlargement of its dominions, and who was now being bribed by Vardanes' rival Gotarzes or

Upper Mesopotamia. Accordingly he took this prince into his councils and requested his opinion as to the prudence of the course which he was contemplating. Izates gave the project his most strenuous opposition. He was profoundly convinced of the military strength and greatness of Rome, and on that account wholly unwilling to quarrel with her, while further he had a private and personal motive for desiring to maintain amicable relations with the great Western power from the fact that five of his sons were residing in Rome, whither he had sent them in order that they might receive a polite education. He pointed this out, to which Vardanes in reply [illegible] and the latter, incensed at a refusal which he regarded as an act of rebellion, proceeded to engage in hostilities against his feudatory.

It was probably this condition of things which induced Gotarzes suddenly to come forth from his retirement and again assert his claim to the Parthian throne—a claim which he had only withdrawn under the pressure of necessity. The quarrel of Vardanes with Izates had weakened his power, and induced even the nobles who had hitherto supported his cause to desert him, and go over to his adversary. Many of these invited Gotarzes to renew the struggle, and Vardanes found himself compelled for the second time to march eastward. Several battles were fought between the two pretenders to the throne in the country between the Caspian and Herat, in which the advantage mostly rested with Vardanes, but his success in the field failed to overcome the aversion in which he was held by his

subjects; and on his return from the war a number of them, in spite of the glory which he had acquired, conspired against him and treacherously slew him in the hunting field.

Vologeses was then unanimously accepted as king, and reigned for some years in peace. But he had the common Parthian defect of a cruel and suspicious temper, while he added to this defect the comparatively unusual fault of indolence and addiction to luxury. In a short time he alienated the affections of his subjects from him, partly by his severities,

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partly by his luxurious living, and to some extent by his ill-success in some great military expeditions. In the year 62 A.D. hopes were raised by those especially opposed to him, for retrieving their country from the effects of a thoroughly bad reign. Claudius the Roman Emperor was approached, and entreated to come to the aid of his Parthian "friends and allies." The name of Vologeses had become intolerable alike to the nobility and the common people. He had murdered all his more relations, or at least all those who were within his reach—first his

brothers, then his near kinsmen finally even those whose relationship was more remote nor had he stopped there as he had proceeded to put to death their young children and the pregnant wives. He was slug-ish in his habits, unfortunate in his wars, and has betaken himself to cruelty, that vice which utterly disgusts him for his want of manliness. They knew that Rome and Parthia were bound together by the terms of a treaty, nor they wanted no infringement of it. Let Rome send them an Arsacid worthy of reigning in the place of the unworthy scion of the house under whose tyranny they groaned. They asked for Meherdates the son of Vonones and grandson of Phraates IV. who was resident at Rome and having been so long accustomed to Roman manners must be expected to rule justly and moderately. This speech was delivered in the Imperial Senate, Gotarzes being present and also Meherdates the candidate for the Parthian throne. The Emperor made a favourable response. He would follow the example of the Divine Augustus and allow the Parthians to receive from Rome the monarch whom they requested. He had given up the city but never been reconciled for his misfortune. He would not allow to be hoped royal honours in his new position but a matter of years but of a ruler of states. He would let that be understood plainly were the more emphasized by the barbarous people the less they had experience of them. Meherdates might accompany the Parthian envoys and a Roman Track [illegible] Cassius the prefect of Syria would be instructed to

receive them on their arrival in Asia, and to see them safely across the Euphrates.

Meherdates thus set out for his proposed kingdom under the fairest auspices. He had a large party devoted to his cause in Parthia itself, he was backed by the great name of Rome, and he had the active support of a Roman of distinction, well acquainted with the East, and of good antecedents. Moreover, when he arrived at Zeugma on the Euphrates, he found himself welcomed, not only by a number of the Parthian nobles, but by a personage of great importance in those parts, no other than Abgarus, the Osrhoenian king who commanded the passages of the Euphrates, and held the country to the east of the river, probably as far as the Khaboras or at any rate of the Rasel-Ain. His wise policy was that he should lend some timely if secret aid against his rival Gotarzes, since the barbarians were always unfortunate at the commencement, but not from energy or even great personal courage. Meherdates, however, fell entirely under the influence of the Osrhoenian monarch, who seems to have been a traitor, like his predecessor in the time of Vologases, and to have treasured from the first the design of bringing prince to his destruction. By the counsel of Abgarus Meherdates was induced, first of all, to waste precious time while he married a succession of wives and banqueted at Edessa, the Osrhoenian capital, and then to proceed against his antagonist by the difficult and circuitous Armenian

* See p. 160.

route, which followed the course of the Tigris by Diarbekr, and, instead of striking directly across Mesopotamia to Ctesiphon. The rough mountain passes and the warlike tribes of Armenia harassed his troops and seriously delayed his progress; time being thus given to Orthris for collecting a strong force and disposing it in the most convenient situations. Fortune, however, still continued to smile on the pretender. When he reached Nisibis, Izates, the powerful monarch of that tract, openly embraced his cause, and brought a body of troops to his assistance. Pressing forward towards Ctesiphon, Melchartes possessed himself of the fort which occupied the ancient site of Nineveh, as well as of the strong post of Arbela, and there found himself on the great vicinity of his enemy. But Orthris was unwilling to risk all on the fate of a battle. He stood on the defensive with the river Zarma in his front, and would not suffer himself to be provoked, or tempted, to an engagement. Reinforcements were still reaching him, and he had a good hope of bringing to his own standard a sufficient proportion of his army to enable him to assume with advantage the offensive. Two months were consumed in these operations. Meanwhile Melchartes and Abgarus the Osrhoenian chieftain, who were close to the enemy's camp, had completely captured and drawn off their troops. Melchartes feared that Orthris would attack his rear, and resolved before leaving the line of the army to precipitate a fight. Orthris, being unwilling to engage, since he was [illegible] battle took

place. It was stoutly contested. For a long time neither side could boast any decided advantage but at last Carrhaces the chief general on the side of Meherdates, having repulsed the troops opposed to him, was tempted to pursue them too far, and being intercepted by the enemy on his return was either killed or made prisoner. His misfortune decided the engagement. The loss of their principal commander caused a general panic among the soldiers of Meherdates, who dispersed in all directions. The pretender might perhaps have escaped, but having entrusted his person to a certain Parthaces, a dependent of his father's, who promised to conduct him to a place of safety, he was seized, bound, and delivered up to Gotarzes. Gotarzes seems to have been touched with compassion by his rival's youth and helplessness. Instead of awarding him the usual punishment of rebels and pretenders who fall into their enemies' hands, he contented himself with inflicting on him a slight mutilation sufficient, according to Oriental ideas, to incapacitate him from ever exercising sovereignty.

This victory which brought the troubles of Gotarzes with his rivals to an end was regarded by him as worthy of commemoration in a manner which the Parthians had but little taste or talent for, and not seldom moved in artistic representations almost the events of their history. But Gotarzes on this occasion took the exceptional course of commemorating his achievement by a rock tablet. On the great and sacred mountain of Behistun originally, I suppose, "The Place of the Gods" which was

already adorned by a sculptured tablet representing the Achæmenian monarch, Darius, the son of Hystaspes, with two attendants, receiving a number of conquered rebels, he caused to be engraved a second, though much smaller tablet representative of his own exploit. In this he appeared seated on horseback, with a heavy spear in his right hand while a Victory flying in the air crowned him with a wreath or diadem, and behind him his army galloped over the plain in pursuit of the flying foe. Some of the figures formed apparently a walking procession, while an inscription in the Greek character and language explained the intention of the monument. This inscription is now almost illegible, but when first found, contained in two places the name "Gotarzes," and in one the name "Mithrates," an undoubted equivalent of "Mehrdates."

It appears that the successful monarch did not long survive his victory. His death, which is assigned by the best authorities to the year A.D. 50, is variously related by the historians. According to Tacitus, it was natural, the result of disease. But according to Josephus it was violent and effected by a conspiracy. There would be nothing surprising in this, since though his whole reign he was unpopular and must have had many bitter enemies. But Tacitus is an authority who cannot be lightly set aside, and his emphatic words—"morbo obiit"—have generally been accepted as closing controversy on the subject. The reign of Gotarzes must be considered to have helped forward in a considerable degree the disorganisation of the Parthian state. It showed Rome how easy it

was to interfere in the internal affairs of her eastern neighbour and to paralyse her action beyond her frontier, by raising troubles within it. It accustomed the Parthians themselves to intrigue, civil war and confusion. It must have tended to recover, to exhaust the resources of the empire. At any rate the downward course of the state from this time, though not rapid, is marked and continuous, and though the tenacity of the race enables it to prolong its independent existence for nearly two centuries longer, yet the student of the history clearly sees that a decline has set in from which any true recovery is impossible.

XVI.

PARTHIA IN THE TIME OF NERO. VOLOGASES I AND CORBULO.

Gotarzes was succeeded by a distant relative, Vardanes, called Varanes, and known in Parthian history as "Vonones the Second." This prince did not occupy the throne more than about two months, and is chiefly remarkable as the father of three kings much more celebrated than himself—Vologases I, King of Parthia, Tiridates, King of Armenia, and Pacorus dependent King of Media. Tiridates appears to have been the eldest, Pacorus the second, and Vologases the third son, but, on the death of their father, the two elder princes agreed to cede the Parthian throne to their younger brother. This was the more remarkable as Vologases was the son of Vonones by a Greek concubine, whereas his two brothers were legitimate. Probably he had given indications of ability, which they did not recognise in themselves, and for which he may have been indebted to the Greek blood that flowed in his veins. At any rate he found himself in A.D. 50 or 51, established upon the throne, and able to reward Pacorus for his complaisance by bestowing on him

the quasi-royal government of Media. Her Tiridates something more was needed, and Vologases may be presumed to have been anxiously on the watch, during the earlier portion of his reign, for an opportunity of conferring on his other brother a dignity worthy of his acceptance. The opportunity came for at last, through circumstances which had lighted up the flames of war in the neighbouring territory of Armenia.

The origin of the strife was the following. Rhadamistus, the eldest son of Pharasmanes, King of

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Iberia, was a youth of such recklessness, and possessed with such a lust for power, that for the security of his own crown, his father thought it necessary to divert his son's thoughts to the acquisition of another. He therefore pointed out to him that his uncle, Mithridates, King of Armenia under the Romans was a most unpopular ruler and that it might not be difficult to supplant him if he took up his residence at his court and gained him to ingratiating himself with the Armenian people. The ambitious youth followed the advice offered him, and

ere long succeeded in making himself a general favourite, after which he contrived to get Mithridates into his power by promising him safe hearth together with his wife and children. This was a challenge to the Romans, who had established Mithridates in his kingdom; but the Roman officer Ummidius Quadratus, president of Syria, whose business it was to take up the challenge, preferred to do so, and another officer, Julius Pelignus, procurator of Cappadocia, went thither and had crowned Rhadamistus to assume the title and insignia of king. A large body of Armenians were however, adverse to the new order of things, recalled Radamistus and condemned the course which he had pursued. The country was accordingly thrown into a ferment, and Vologeses having recently ascended the Parthian throne, and needing a prince, by whom his brother Tiridates should be succeeded, saw in the state of Armenia an excellent opportunity of at once gratifying his brother and advancing his own reputation. To detach Armenia once more from the dominion of Rome and restore it to Parthia would be a happy inauguration of his reign, and one that would draw down upon him the open applause and secret envy of his neighbours.

Accordingly Vologeses, in A.D. 51, the year of his accession, having collected a large force, led an expedition into Armenia. At first it seemed as if he would effect an easy conquest. The Iberian garrison, on whose support Rhadamistus principally relied, quitted the field without risking a battle, the Armenian troops made but a poor resistance,

Artaxata and Tigranocerta, his two principal cities, opened their gates to the foe, Vologases took possession of Armenia, and established Pacorus at Artaxata, the capital. But this fair beginning was soon clouded over. A severe winter, and some defect in the commissariat arrangements, caused the destruction of a great part of the Parthian garrisons, so that Vologases was compelled to withdraw them. Khosrhoes returned, and though received by his subjects and occasionally in danger of losing his life in the wild country, contrived to maintain himself during the three years extending from A.D. 51 to 54, and was still in possession when Vologases, in the last-named year, having brought some other wars to an end, found himself in a position to resume his designs upon Armenia.

The delay in grappling with the Armenian affair by no means had a double origin. In A.D. 47 a dispute had arisen between Vologases and one of his principal feudatories, Izates, king of Adiabene, whose pretensions to exclusive privileges appeared to his feudal lord excessive, and even treasonable. After fruitless negotiations, Izates appealed to arms, and took up a position on the lower Zab, which was the southern limit of his territory. Vologases had advanced to the opposite bank of the river, and was on the point of crossing, and attacking his revolted vassal, when he was recalled from the prosecution of his own schemes by a foreign enemy. The Dahæ and the Scythians, as their neighbours called them, or Parthian Dahæ, from the country which they occupied, were threatening to carry fire and sword through the entire province

Domestic revolt could be chastised at any time but a foreign foe must be met as soon as he showed himself. Volagases accordingly marched away from Ashdambe to the Parthian and Hyrcanian frontier east of the Caspian sea, where he met and defeated the band of marauders, and had probably only to threaten to invade his territory because they were known to be employed in a serious quarrel at a considerable distance and imagined that they would therefore be unmolested. Soon send in this quarter he was about to resume his operations in Armenia, when information reached him of the death of Izates, which brought his domestic difficulties to an end. His pretensions of the deceased monarch had been perhaps during ground upon recent privileges granted him by Artabanus III, which would not permit a successor and Vologases had consequently no course with Monobazus, Izates brother, who had inherited his throne. He thus found himself at the close of A.D. 53, without his own master and free to engage in whatever enterprise might seem to him most promising.

Under these circumstances it is not surprising that, in A.D. 54, he turned his attention once more to Armenian affairs, and resumed his project of establishing his brother Tiridates upon the throne of that ancient and at some time kept kingdom. Rhadamistus though he continued in possession of the throne which he had failed to establish his power or to alienate by from him the affections of his subjects, and might be attacked with a good prospect of success, unless he received external

assistance. The real question was, would Rome interfere? Would she submit to what Tiridates must have known he had not received his throne from heaven but had obtained it by the murder of his brother *Artaxes*? Vologases was probably aware that a new sovereign had recently received the Imperial throne, a youth not yet eighteen years of age, in whose despatch of many tasks of training, devoted to music and the arts which could not be practised with very keen patriotic feelings, we have a very full comprehension of the secret of the political situation. Would this raw youth grasp the meaning of a diminution of Roman influence in the far East or rush to arms because a border kingdom—not a Roman province—wavered in its allegiance? Vologases, it would seem, answered three questions in the negative or perhaps, while recognising the risk he may have thought the immediate advantage so great as to make it worth his while to encounter the hazard. At any rate early in A.D. 54 he made his invasion of the Kharkhanis and Armenia, received the whole country to submission, and established his brother Tiridates, as king, in the capital city of Artaxata.

The boldness of this stroke took the Romans by surprise and produced something like panic in the Imperial city. But the traditions of Imperial policy were too firmly fixed in the minds of the official class for any doubt to be entertained as to the necessity of meeting and resisting the aggression. Orders went forth at once for concentrating the Oriental legions up to the full strength, and for moving them

nearer to the Armenian frontier, preparations were made for bringing the Euphrates, Agrippa II., King of Chalcis and Antiochus, King of Commagene, were ordered to raise troops and make ready for an invasion of Parthia, new governors were appointed over Syria and the Lesser Armenia, above and beyond all, the brave and experienced Corbulo, universally allowed to be the best general of the time was summoned from his command in Germany, and given the general superintendence of the war in Armenia, with Cappadocia and Galatia as his provinces. Ummidius Quadratus was maintained in the procons[illegible]ship of Syria but required to co-operate with Corbulo, and made practically his second in command. Four legions together with numerous auxiliaries were concentrated on the Armenian frontier, and it seemed as if the next year would see the contest between Rome and Parthia renewed on a scale which would recall the times of Antony and Phraates IV.

But the ardent hopes the new year brought nothing but disappointment. Instead of rushing to arms, and pouring their combined legions into Armenia or Parthia, the two Roman commanders evidently showed a disposition for peace. Embassies from both sought the Court of Vologases with offers of peace—offers which implied an acceptance of the *status quo*, provided that the Parthian monarch would take no further steps in protection to Rome and would place some Parthians of importance in the hands of the Romans as hostages. This he was quite willing to do, as he knew many of the nobles

to be disaffected, and their absence from his Court would relieve him of the necessity of watching them. Internal troubles, probably fomented by Rome, had commenced by the open revolt of his son, Vardanes, whose detection from his father Tacitus places in A.D. 54,* and whose coins show that he had assumed the royal title, and set himself up as a rival to Volagases certainly before the end of the next year. A truce with Rome was consequently, what the Parthian monarch must earnestly have desired, and we can only feel surprised that the Roman

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commanders should have consented to play into his hands, and have left him wholly unmolested in the time of his greatest difficulties. Probably they were already jealous of each other, and disinclined to press forward a war in which each felt that mere accident might give the chief laurels to the other.

Volagases was thus able to give his whole attention, during the three years from A.D. 55 to A.D. 58 to the contest with his son. Its details have not come down to us, but it appears to be certain that by the spring of A.D. 58 he had succeeded in crushing the revolt,

* Tacit. "Ann.," xiii. 7; *ad fin.*

and re-establishing her authority over the whole [illegible]. As Vologaesus was reported to be preparing for another campaign, Corbulo was recalled. He crossed the Euphrates, but, to the years 61 to 63 and [illegible] a series of manœuvres of [illegible] with an expression that it was [illegible] determined.

The Great King, however, was not likely to resume the contest and [illegible] which his sons [illegible] had compelled him to [illegible] and [illegible] Armenia on [illegible], [illegible] his own [illegible] [illegible] by [illegible] [illegible] arrangement. He claimed that of right, and by ancient possession, Armenia was a Parthian province, or at least a vassal kingdom, and resented that not [illegible] should [illegible] in [illegible] but [illegible], but that there should be a [illegible] understanding that he held it, not as a Roman but as a Parthian [illegible]. To this the Romans, and [illegible] Corbulo, demurred. Armenia, they said, had been [illegible] to the Roman Empire by [illegible] or at any rate by [illegible], and it was not consistent with the [illegible] of Rome to [illegible] territory which [illegible] had once acquired. Let Tiridates remain quiet and the matter be settled by negotiation, otherwise [illegible] would be compelled to use force. Corbulo had [illegible] the three years of waiting by recruiting his legions from [illegible] and by [illegible], and by accustoming them to the hardships of winter marches and movements. He had also obtained an artillery [illegible] from Germany, and he was [illegible] ready for an [illegible]

Tiridates soon gave him the opportunity which he seems to have desired. Having received a contingent of troops from Vologases he commenced operations against the Roman partisans in Armenia Sophene, them with fire and sword, who escaped to Rome crossed the frontier to their relief. A number of partial engagements were fought, in which Rome had the advantage, and at last, after three years of fighting, Tiridates had to flee from his capital city, Artaxata, in A.D. 58, and Tigranocerta the second city [illegible] in A.D. 60 was taken from the latest and only added the entire possession of Armenia to the Romans. By the favour of Nero, Tigranes, grandson of Archelaus, a former monarch of Cappadocia, was made king, but, as his ability to administer so large a territory was doubted, portions of it were detached from his rule and made over to the neighbouring princes Pharnasmanes of Iberia Polemo of Pontus, Aristobulus of the Lesser Armenia and Antiochus of Commagene, profited by the new arrangement, which could not, however, but be distasteful to the Armenians, who saw the country of which they were so proud, not merely conquered, but broken into fragments.

Corbulo's success must be attributed in a great measure to the absence of Vologases from the scene of contest. The Armenian monarch had been called away in A.D. 58 to his north-eastern frontier by a revolt perhaps fomented by Rome of the distant province of Hyrcania and had found full occupation there for his utmost energies so that he was wholly

See Dean Merivale's 'Roman Empire' vol. [illegible] p. 45.

unable to lend efficient aid to his brother. But, about the year 70 A.D. the Hyrcanian troubles came to an end, and the house of Volagases being once more free, I had to consider and determine whether he should accept the state of things established in Armenia by Corbulo or whether by force of arms to modify it. I was conscious how well I deserved, but his own merit is seldom left unrewarded. It is unnecessary for me to tell you the untoward aggressions of Ingenuus, and his rash proceedings in Media, and the bitter complaints of his subjects who threatened to invade their territories and to Rome. It lay in my choice. His own weakness and the honour of his country alike required him to assert his cause in arms; and Vologases, having made up his mind to declare war, announced his intention to me in a letter which is now, I believe, in the hands of the Parthians, who, I learned from the treachery of Parthia by the cession of my brother's claims, my intention was to substitute for the old system of fraternal hatred and strife, a new one of domestic affection and agreement. My brother Tiridates, accordingly, received Media from my hand at once, and Urnates, whom you see now present before you, I shortly afterwards inducted into the royal appanage of Armenia, a dignity reckoned the third in the Parthian kingdom. Thus I put my family matters on a peaceful and satisfactory footing. But these arrangements are now disturbed by the Romans, who have never hitherto gained anything by breaking faith with us, and will scarcely do so on the present occasion. I shall not deny that up to this time I have procured

to maintain my right to the dominions left me by my ancestors by fair dealing rather than by shedding of blood by negotiation rather than by arms, if however I have erred in this, and I have been weak to delay so long, I will now amend my fault by showing the more vigour. You at any rate have lost nothing by my holding back, your strength is intact, your glory undiminished. Nay, you have added to your other well-known merits, the credit of moderation, a virtue which not even the highest among men can afford to despise, and which the gods view with special favour?" His speech ended, Vologases placed a diadem on the brow of Tiridates, in token of his determination to restore him to the Armenian throne, at the same time commanding Monaeses, a Parthian noble, and Monobazus, the Adiabenian king, to take the field and invade Armenia, while he himself collected the whole struggle of the empire, and marched to attack the Roman legions on the Euphrates.

The campaign which followed was of less importance than might have been anticipated from these preparations for it. Vologases, instead of invading Syria, marched no further than Nisibis, which was well within the limits of his own dominions. Monaeses and Monobazus on the other hand, carried out the concerted programme, and having invaded Armenia, and advanced to Tigrano-certa, which had now become the capital of the kingdom, besieged Tigranes in that city (A.D. 62). But the Parthian attack on walled places was always ineffective and Tigrano-certa happened to be exceptionally strong. The walls are said

to have been seventy-two feet in height, the river Nicephorius, a broad stream, washed a portion of them, a huge moat protected the remainder, the town was strongly garrisoned, and the besieging force, though not wanting in gallantry, proved unable to make any serious impression upon the place. Vologeses, as time went on, began to despair of effecting very much by existing circumstances; his forces, worn and hard towards mountain and Caucasus contest, Hyrcany, which was not almost of any of worry was to be by want of forage. Mesopotamia having recently suffered from a plague of locusts. Hence he consented to conclude a truce with Corbulo, and to send a fresh embassy to Rome for the purpose of making a satisfactory arrangement. The truce was to last until the ambassadors returned, and meanwhile Armenia was to be evacuated by both parties, and care was to be taken that no collision should occur between the soldiers of the two nations.

But this well-meant effort at pacification was entirely without result. Nero gave the envoys no answer, and ordered, it had made arrangements before their arrival from which he anticipated a triumphant issue to the contest—visions of a more patched up and unstable convention. At the request of Corbulo, who was anxious not to arouse his jealousy, he had sent out a second commander to the East, a special favourite of his own, and to him the conduct of the war by this new leader looked for immediate results of the most important character. L. Caesennius Paetus was a man of energy and boldness, confident in him-

self and contemptuous of the prudence and caution of his colleague. He held a separate command with forces equal to those left by Corbulo, and soon let it be known that he was about to carry on the war in a new fashion. "Corbulo," he said, "had shown no daring in what he had neither plundered nor massacred. If he had besieged cities it had been in name rather than in reality. His own method would be different. Instead of setting up shadowy kings he would bring Armenia under Roman law and render it by the conduct of a province." These brave words were followed up by a show of brave deeds. Crossing the Euphrates Petus invaded Armenia with two legions, and spreading his troops over a wide extent of country, burnt the strongholds, ravaged the territory, and carried off a considerable booty. But he neither fought a single battle, nor ventured to besiege a single town. As winter approached, he withdrew his troops into Cappadocia, but intent on pleasing his Imperial master he gave in his dispatches an exaggerated account of what he had achieved in his short campaign, and spoke as if the war was well nigh over.

Corbulo on his part, maintained the prudent attitude habitual to him. He bridged the Euphrates in the face of a large opposing force by anchoring vessels laden with military engines in mid-stream. He then passed his troops across, and occupied a strong position in the hills at a little distance from the river where he caused his soldiers to construct an entrenched camp, and remained on the defensive. He greatly mistrusted Petus, and would not allow himself to be so entangled in military operations as not to be able

at any moment to march to his colleague's assistance if he should hear that he was in any danger.

The prudence of this course soon became evident. Paetus, regarding the season for war as over, sent one of his legions to winter in Pontus while he himself with the other two took up his quarters in the country between the Lycus and the Iris rivers and allowed free furloughs to all the soldiers who applied for them. While his legions were in this way much weakened, he suddenly heard that Vologases, having, the inclemency of the season notwithstanding, marched against him at the head of a strong force. The crisis revealed his incapacity. He was uncertain whether to await the enemy in quarters or to take the field against him, whether to concentrate his troops or to disperse them. Now he adopted one course, now another. The only consistency that he showed was in imploring aid from Corbulo, to whom he sent messenger after messenger. That general however was in no hurry to render help, since he did not wish to appear upon the scene as a deliverer until it was clear that the danger threatening Paetus was imminent. Vologases meanwhile steadily pursued his way. Without attempting any rapid movements he crossed in upon Paetus, his adversary, swept away the small force that Paetus had detached to guard the passes of Taurus, and hemmed up the remainder of his army in a position from which extrication, unless his colleague came to his aid, was almost impossible. Corbulo was now on the march, and pressing forward with all speed, but a panic had seized on Paetus and his soldiers. Though he had abundant provisions, and might have prolonged the contest

for weeks, or even for months yet to come, cowardly alarm he pretended to prefer private matters, and having entered into negotiations with Vologases he practically capitulated to him. The terms granted were, that the blockaded army should be allowed to quit its entrenchments, and be free to march away; but that it must at once quit Armenia, its stores and its fortified posts must be surrendered, no further hostilities must be organized in, and Parthia should obtain from Nero the exact conditions on which he would now be willing to make peace. These terms were carried out not however without the addition of some further insults and indignities. The Parthians entered the Roman entrenchments before the legionaries had quitted them, crowding and seizing whatever they professed to recognize as Armenian spoil, they even took possession of the soldiers' arms and clothes which were tamely relinquished to them with the object of avoiding a conflict. Armenia was then quitted hastily, and not without disorder, Paetus setting the example of unseemly hurry. Cappadocia was reached after a three days' march and received the fugitives without reproaches, and with every demonstration of sympathy.

Vologases followed up his success against Paetus by at once re-establishing his brother Tiridates in the Armenian kingdom. At the same time he devised a plan whereby he thought, the interminable quarrel between the two empires of Rome and Parthia might be made up, and a *modus vivendi* arrived at. Rome, under Nero at any rate, was not really bent upon further conquests. It was rather Let her fear or which she was eager than her power which he desired to see

augmented. Vologeses therefore sent an embassy to the Court of Nero, and explained that so long as his brother was accepted and acknowledged by Rome as Armenian king he would offer no objection to his going in person to Rome and receiving the tiara from the Imperial hands. Nero and his counsellors gladly approved this compromise, but they felt that it would be inopportune, after former claims, and the manifest weakness shortly by recent disaster if they [illegible] with the power of the Parthian monarchy. No Roman must not make an open confession of defeat. Our retreat from a campaign must be glossed over or denied. Dust must be thrown in the eyes of the nation, and they must be induced to think that we had never contemplated more in the political arrangements we made of their own free will, and because we regarded it as for our advantage. Accordingly, the envoys of Vologeses were dismissed with an ambiguous answer. Pacorus was recalled from the East, and Cerealis received the command and the state was assured that it should be subject to Roman authority. The nullity of his troops was [illegible] and their quality improved by drafts from Egypt and Illyricum. He was but three days' march from the Euphrates, and, in the spring of A.D. 63, he crossed the frontier, and penetrated to the heart of Armenia by the road formerly opened by Lucullus. Tiridates made no attempt however to [illegible] for regular battle. On the site of the camp of Pacorus an interview was held between the Roman general and the Armenian monarch, who had been [illegible] by the envoys of Vologeses at Rome were accepted. It was agreed that Rome

should withdraw her support from Tiridates and acknowledge Tigranes as rightful monarch, while Tiridates should perform an act of homage to Rome for his kingdom, and be crowned by Rome's feudatory Tigranes. This was the purport of the terms. Tiridates, on the presence of Corbulo and his suite, invested himself of the royal ensigns and went to meet at the foot of the statue of Nero, with intention not to resume them except at Nero's hands. For actual investiture he understood he was to journey to Rome as soon as circumstances permitted, and meanwhile be placed at the head of a contingent of his daughters and his stage curtain, on his part Corbulo asserted that Tiridates should be treated with the utmost honour and respect both during his stay at Rome and in the journey to and from Italy, should be entitled to wear his sword and have free access to all the provincial authorities upon the route. Peace was made upon these terms to the satisfaction of both parties and it only remained that the terms should be faithfully executed.

The execution was delayed for the space of almost two years, but the visit of Vologeses. Tiridates having set the affairs of Armenia in order started upon his pompous journey accompanied by a wife by a number of the Parthian princes and nobles and by a number of Magian priests and Median horsemen, and by an escort of three thousand Parthian cavalry in all the panoply, array of their gold ornaments and bright armour and spears. The long cavalcade passed in a magnificent triumphal procession through the provinces of the Roman Empire, and was everywhere received with warmth, and

entertainments with profuse liberality. The [illegible] were [illegible] to receive their presents [illegible] and the loyal acclamations of the assembled multitudes showed that they had appreciated the novel spectacle. The whole country except the passage of the Euphrates was [illegible] and the candidate proceeded [illegible] Thence he [illegible] to the coast of the Adriatic Gulf and [illegible] the peninsula. The Roman Treasury defrayed the entire expenses of the travellers, which are said to have amounted to an average daily cost of 800 sesterces, or about £6 of English money. As this embassy was continued for nine months the entire sum expended on the Treasury must have exceeded a million and a half pounds sterling. Audience was given to the Parthian prince at Naples, where Nero happened to be residing and presided with [illegible] dignity. At first [illegible] presented itself, as it was the etiquette of the Roman Court that those introduced to the Emperor were to be unarmed; and consequently the usher who [illegible] the Parthian requested [illegible] his sword. This he refused to do, since he was entitled to wear it by the terms of his agreement with Corbulo. The affair might have ended in a conference had not it been suggested that the Emperor's safety might be secured at the [illegible] by the simple expedient of [illegible], the ceremony upon its scabbard with but a [illegible]. This done, Tiridates was introduced into the Imperial presence, where he made

the prince bending one knee to the ground in front of him, his hands and at the same time saluting the Emperor as his "lord."

The investiture was reserved for a subsequent occasion, and was made a spectacle to the Roman populace. On the night preceding all the streets of the city were illuminated and decorated with garlands as for a triumphal approach, the Tribes, clothed in long white robes and bearing torches in their hands, entered the Forum and filled all the inner space, arranged as was customary, next to the Praetorians, in their splendid arms and with their gleaming standards, stationing themselves in two lines which reached from the further extremity of the Forum to the Rostra, to maintain the avenue of approach clear. All the roofs of the houses which gave upon the Forum were thronged with the masses of spectators. At break of day Nero himself entered, accompanied by the Senate and by his own body-guard, wearing the garb appropriate to Triumphs, and proceeding down between the two lines of Praetorians ascended a raised platform near the Rostra, and took his seat in a curule chair. Tiridates was then introduced, silence was proclaimed, and in a short speech of a self-laudatory character, the Parthian prince placed himself at the Roman Emperor's disposal. Nero responded haughtily, but executed the long-awaited investiture. Saluting Tiridates as king of Armenia he handed him to a seat prepared for the purpose at his own feet, gave him the kiss which sovereigns may give to sovereigns, and with his own hand placed upon his brow the

coveted fortress, the symbol of Oriental sovereignty. Magnificent entertainments followed, with chariot and games of various kinds, in which the emperor himself took part, but this condescension astonished more than it pleased the Asiatic. However, he doubtless appreciated better the homage paid to the entire Imperial world when a part of it brought its annual succession of not much less than a million sterling.[1]

The late journey to Asia across the Adriatic and by the ordinary route through Greece no doubt well pleased with his visit. At the cost of a formal submission and a certain amount of personal humiliation, he had obtained a result which not even a king could despise, and an assured title to the throne of a considerable kingdom. Nero was what must be regarded as the moving spirit throughout the whole transaction, and may also well have been satisfied. He had firmly established his brother upon the Armenian throne, and if he had conceded to Rome merely the honour and dignity of the arrangement, yet he had secured to himself the substantial advantage. As Lucan Mercury was observed: 'When Tiridates did homage to his kingdom to Nero he was pleased to place himself really under the protection of Vologæses.'[2]

[1] "Roman Empire," vol. vii. p. 26.

XVII.

VOLOGASES I AND VESPASIAN. PACORUS II AND DECEBALUS OF DACIA.

The establishment of peace between Rome and Parthia was a fortunate circumstance for the subjects of the two empires, as the vexations to the merchants between the Parthians, since it places before us a considerable advantage. Until the conclusion of the peace we are able to obtain tolerably ample materials for the narrative from the Greek and Roman writers, who describe the condition of affairs in the East under the early Roman Emperors, and who have to trace the causes and course of the hostilities in which the two countries were engaged almost continuously. From the date of the pacification we shall derive no benefit of this consecutive history, and have nothing to rely upon except a few scattered and isolated notices, not always very intelligible, occurring here and there in the pages of the classical authors together with the coins, which now become a very confused and confusing guide. The whole number of Parthian history is thus, for the space of about half a century, most imperfect and disjointed. Even the succession of the

kings is uncertain, and the attribution of the coins to this or that monarch, mostly tentatively or conjecture.

The latest authority seems to be of opinion that Vologases I—the monarch who succeeded the Parthian throne in A.D. 50 or 51—continued to reign until about A.D. 77. If so, he must have been contemporary with six Roman Emperors—Claudius, Nero, Galba, Otho, Vitellius and Vespasian—whose successive reigns coincide exactly with the last quarter of these forty-eight years. The relations between the two rulers were for the most part friendly. When Vespasian first came forward as a candidate for empire (A.D. 70) Vologases went so far as to offer him the services of forty thousand horse archers to assist in establishment upon the throne; but the successes of his generals in Italy enabled the Emperor to decline the magnificent proposal, and so to escape the odium of employing foreign troops. "Barbarians," the Romans would have said, against their own countrymen. In the same spirit when, a year later, Titus paid a visit to the Roman station of Zeugma on the Euphrates, the Parthian monarch sent to congratulate him on his success in conclusion of the Jewish war, and begged him to accept at his hands a crown of gold. Titus, with his usual amiability, consented, and to show his appreciation of the compliment paid him, invited the envoys of Vologases to a banquet and sumptuously entertained them.

Shortly after this, however, by the machinations of Caesennius Paetus, the unsuccessful general in the last Armenian campaign, who had been recently promoted to the office of Syrian governor, those pleasing

prospects were overclouded, and a rupture in the amicable relations that had hitherto subsisted between the two monarchs, appeared to be imminent. Cæsennius Pætus—on what grounds it is impossible to say, perhaps on no reasonable grounds at all—sent a report to Vespasian, in A.D. 70, of a most important and alarming character. He had discovered a plot, he said, for the transfer of the Roman supremacy of Commagene, a portion of Upper Syria, from the Romans to the Parthians; a plot concerted, he declared, between Vologæses and the Commagenian king, Antiochus, and about to be almost immediately put into execution. Samosata, the capital of Commagene, which commanded the passage of the Euphrates, was to be put into the hands of the Parthians in March by the Commagenians, and a ready access thereby given to the Roman provinces of Cappadocia, Cilicia, and Syria itself, which could all be easily invaded from that important site. Unless he were authorized at once to take steps to prevent the transfer, it would within a very short space be accomplished, and the East once more thrown into confusion. Vespasian, who had no reason to doubt the correctness of the proconsul's information, replied to him without delay, and gave him full liberty of acting as he thought best. Hereupon, Pætus who had made every preparation in anticipation of such a response immediately mustered a strong force at Commagene, and meeting with no resistance, proceeded against Samosata which he carried by a *coup de main*. It cannot but be suspected that the whole story told to Vespasian was the invention of

Petus who [illegible] war [illegible] for [illegible] energies. His sudden [illegible] only [illegible] to produce [illegible] that he sought [illegible] about [illegible] the [illegible] of the presence of the [illegible] sovereigns against [illegible] charges had been made. Antiochus, the Commagenian monarch, refused altogether to assume the part of rebel which had been assigned him, and though his sons took [illegible] Petus himself withdrew from the country and passed into the Roman province of Cappadocia, [illegible] up his quarters at Tarsus. Vologases, however, gave the [illegible] to be the sons of Antiochus my support. He forced his [illegible] arms, and simply [illegible] where they encountered with Petus, when [illegible] their fathers' withdrawal into Cilicia their troops [illegible] and they were forced to take to flight. He contented himself with allowing them a refuge in Parthia and writing a letter to Vespasian [illegible] their behalf. It was probably this letter which induced Vespasian at last to permit the young princes to [illegible] them to reside at Rome with their father, while at the same time he made the former a considerable allowance from his privy purse.

It was not long after he had escaped the danger of a Roman war that Vologases was attacked by a savage enemy from another quarter. The Alans, a Scythic, or more probably a Finnish tribe from the regions east of the Caspian Sea, made an [illegible] with the important nation of the Hyrcanians, which in later Parthian history gave many signs of being dissatisfied, burst through the Caspian Gates suddenly in the year A.D. 75, and, pouring into Media, drove

King Pacorus, the brother of Vologases, to take refuge in the fastnesses of the mountains, while they carried fire and sword over the open country. From Media they passed on into Armenia, which was still held by Tiridates. Defeated him in a pitched battle, and very nearly succeeded in making him prisoner by means of a ruse. Vologases, in the meantime, sent an embassy to Vespasian, and, following on his own offer a few years previously, to aid the Roman Emperor, if he required it, a body of forty thousand horse archers, asked that an efficient contingent of Roman troops might now be placed at his disposal. He further requested that their commander might be either Titus or Domitian. The latter prince, jealous of his brother's military fame, was most anxious to be selected, and to be placed at the head of a powerful army, so that he might have an opportunity of rivaling the great achievements of Titus. But Vespasian, with the caution of old age, felt averse from embarking the State in fresh adventures, and bluntly declared that he saw no reason for making himself a busybody in affairs that no way concerned him. Had he accepted the proffered support of Vologases in years previously, the case would have been different, but, as he had declined it, his hands were unshackled and he was free either to consent or to refuse as he chose. The best interests of the State seemed to him to require abstention, and he therefore sent a negative reply to Vologases. The Parthian prince was not only disappointed, but angered and vented his spleen by withholding from the Emperor, in subsequent diplomatic correspondence, his rightful titles. Vespasian,

with a sense of humour rare in persons so highly placed made no remonstrance beyond the ironic one of adopting in his reply the humble style assigned him by his correspondent. To the salutation "Arsaces, King of Kings, to Flavius Vespasianus sends greeting," he answered "Flavius Vespasianus, to Arsaces, King of Kings sends greeting."

A coolness in the relations between the two powers now set in. Parthia, thrown on her own resources, was forced to submit to considerable loss in the way of booty at the hands of the Alani and their allies, and was unable to take any revenge upon them for their unprovoked attack. But she succeeded in maintaining her western territories intact, and in recovering both Media and Armenia. Hyrcania, it may be supposed, was from this time detached from her rule, and the cause of continual trouble and disturbance, falling under the dominion of pretenders who claimed Arsacid descent, and even took the full titles of Parthian sovereignty.

Vologases died about A.D. 78, and was succeeded by a certain Pacorus, not his brother but probably his son, who appears by his coins to have been, at his accession, a very young man, and seems to have reigned for thirty years, from A.D. 78 to A.D. 108. This prince was thus contemporary with five Roman Emperors—Vespasian, Titus, Domitian, Nerva, and Trajan—but with none of these does he seem to have held any communications. The "coolness" which had set in under his father gradually deepened into hostility; and, when the warlike Trajan came to the throne, it was soon apparent that an open quarrel

could not be long avoided. Rome's pretensions to a predominating influence in Armenia were revived, and Parthia, not knowing how soon she might be attacked, began to look out for allies among the avowed enemies of the Roman Empire. Relations were established between Pacorus and Decebalus,[1] the Dacian monarch who had been at war with Rome in the reign of Domitian (A.D. 81–96), and was now A.D. 101–106 again threatened by Trajan. Pacorus, however, had not the courage to lend his aid by any active assistance either by sending troops to his ally in the

COIN OF PACORUS II.

struggle that went on upon the Danube, or by effecting a diversion in his favour upon the Euphrates. When Decebalus fell in A.D. 104, and Dacia became a Roman province, Pacorus must have felt that he stood alone, and that, having provoked the hostility of Rome by his relations with her enemy, he might expect at any moment an attack. Trajan however, was too wise and too cautious to precipitate matters; an invasion of the East needed careful preparation, and the invasion which he contemplated was one of

[1] Dion, "Epit." of lib. lxviii. Merivale, "Roman Empire," vol. viii. p. 154.

unusual importance and magnitude he therefore abstained for the present from all offensive measures, and contented himself with paving the way for his intended expedition by intrigues in Armenia and elsewhere by accumulating warlike stores, and increasing the strictness of military discipline. Parthia was thus left in peace to the termination of his long, reign. It was at the close of this long and troubled reign that the events occurred which led to the rise of the Sassanian dynasty.

COIN OF ARTABANUS IV.

XVIII

CHOSROES AND HADRIAN—PARTHAMASPATES ON THE THRONE—ESTABLISHMENT OF THESE CONQUESTS BY HADRIAN.

PACORUS THE SECOND was succeeded upon the throne by Chosroes, his brother, whom the Parthian Magistanes preferred with the heads of Exedares to Parthamaspates, Pacorus's two sons, as more fit to rule under the difficult circumstances of the period. It

COIN OF CHOSROES.

was known or at any rate suspected, that the warlike and experienced Trajan designed an expedition against the East, and it therefore seemed necessary to entrust the government of the Parthian fate to a man of mature age and sound judgment. The sons of Pacorus were young and rash, certainly incompetent to cope with so dangerous an antagonist as Trajan

Chosroes was of ripe age at any rate, and though untried was believed to possess ability, a belief which after events, on the whole, justified.

The ostensible cause of quarrel between Rome and Parthia was, as so frequently before, Armenia. On the death of Tiridates in or about the year A.D. 88 Pacorus appears, without any previous reference to Rome, to have placed his own son, Exedares, upon the Armenian throne. This was certainly throwing out a challenge to Trajan, and was a high-handed proceeding not justified by the previous relations of the countries. On the last occasion of the throne being vacant, though Parthia had nominated the prince, Rome might to give investiture had been admitted, and Tiridates had in fact received his diadem from the hands of Nero. But Pacorus probably knew that Trajan had his hands fully occupied with the Dacian troubles, and was therefore not likely to engage in another war, while he may perhaps have thought that the right of investiture was too shadowy a matter for Rome greatly to value it. Events so far justified his expectations that Trajan made neither remonstrance nor threat at the time, but seemingly acquiesced in the new departure. When however the Dacian War was over, and the country reduced into the form of a Roman province, about A.D. 114, the Emperor, whose appetite for conquest was whetted rather than satisfied by his Danubian successes, considered that the time was come for taking the affairs of the East into serious consideration, and for placing them on a footing which should give Rome security against the troubles that had now for

about a century and a half, threatened her from this quarter.

Two views might be taken of the Oriental question. It might be regarded in the light in which the greatest of the Roman Emperors—Augustus, Tiberius, Vespasian—had hitherto regarded it, as chronic—a fatal necessity involving continuous trouble, constant effort, and at the best of times only admitting of a sort of precarious armed truce. Or it might be viewed in a more hopeful spirit as Alexander the Great had viewed it, as but lying in order to be conquered, a difficulty to be overcome, an obstacle in the state of things which might be brought to an end, and ought to be brought to an end as soon as possible. Ordinary minds would naturally see it in the former light. There had always been an East, there would necessarily always be an East set in antagonism to the West with a perpetual quarrel going on between them. The wise would then only admit of palliatives, part of *remedies made ready* such expedients as a wise diplomacy might suggest, and carry out but as being conducive of maintaining them and carrying on such intercourse as was necessary with as little friction as possible. The other view opened a wider range both of thought and action. Might it be practicable to crush the East to get rid of the constant antagonism, and if so, by what means and at what cost?

That this latter alternative was not an altogether hopeless one had been shown by Alexander himself. Alexander had conquered the East, and for a century and a half there had been no great barbarian

Oriental monarchy standing over against the West, thwarting, and threatening it. The ambition of Trajan seems to have been fired by the thought of what Alexander had achieved, and a touch of vanity seems to have taken possession of him. Without divulging his intentions even to his confidantes, unless, as Cassius Dio suggests, he had spoken of them in determining on an attempt to bring the Parthian question to an end by the subjugation of Parthia. At first, however, he veiled his designs under a cloak of pretended moderation. He professed that his sole object was the vindication of the Roman honour in respect of Armenia. Both Eutropius and Victor say that he treated Rome by dealing with Armenia as if it were a province of Parthia, and not a foreign state. He could plead, on the contrary, that the authority of Rome was paramount. It was in vain that Chosroes[1] tried to fall back upon the *modus transactus* which had been accepted by Nero, and to ask Trajan to invest his son, Parthamasiris, a son of Pacorus and younger brother of Exedares, with the diadem. Trajan replied that he would see what was fittest to be done when he arrived in Syria, and proceeded to quicken his march, to augment the number of his troops, and to make preparations of an unusual character. The autumn of A.D. 113 saw him at Antioch, and in the spring of the ensuing year, undaunted by the terrible earthquake which had almost destroyed the Syrian capital in the winter of A.D. 115, he set out upon his march from Antioch to the Armenian frontier. The satraps

[1] See above, pp. 149, 150.

and petty princes of the vicinity made submission as he advanced, and sought his favour with gifts of various kinds, which he was pleased to receive graciously while he made his way from Zeugma, the Roman outpost, to the passages of the Euphrates at Samosata and Europus. Here on the frontier of the Greater Armenia he awaited the arrival of Parthamasiris, who, after attempting to negotiate with him as an equal, and hence the treaty which Hadrian had been encouraged to present himself as a suppliant in the Roman camp and to ask his crown of Trajan. There can be no doubt that the Armenian princes understood that the scene was to be a repetition of that enacted at Rome in A.D. 66, when Tiridates received the diadem from Nero. But Trajan was otherwise minded. When the young prince having ridden into the camp at the head of a small retinue stript the diadem from his head and laid it at the feet of the Roman Emperor, then stood motionless, expecting that his humble submission would be graciously accepted, and that the crown of sovereignty would be returned to him, Trajan made no movement. The army, which stood around prepared, no doubt, for the occasion, shouted with all their might, and, saluting Trajan as Imperator, congratulated him on his 'Bloodless victory.' Parthamasiris saw that he had fallen into a trap, and would fain have fled, but the troops had closed in upon him on all sides and he found his retreat intercepted. Hereupon he once more mounted the Emperor, and demanded a private audience which was granted him. A short conference was held be-

tween the two in the Emperor's tent but the proposals of Parthamasiris were rejected. He was given to understand that he must submit to the forfeiture of his crown, and summoned a second time before the Imperial tribunal to show cause, if he desired to do so against the proposed forfeiture, and to hear the Emperor's decision. Parthamasiris justly indignant, spoke at some length, and with much spirit. "He had neither been defeated," he said, "nor made prisoner by the Romans, but had come of his own free will to hold a conference with the chief of the Roman State in full assurance that he would suffer no wrong at his hands, but would be reinstated by him with the Armenian sovereignty, just as Tiridates had been invested by Nero. He demanded to be set at liberty, together with his retinue." Trajan answered curtly that he did not intend to give the sovereignty of Armenia to any one. The country belonged to Rome, and should have a Roman governor. Parthamasiris might go where he pleased with his Parthians; but any Armenians that he had brought with him must remain—they were Roman subjects. Parthamasiris upon this rode off, but Trajan had no intention of allowing him to escape and become the leader in an Armenian war. He ordered some of his troops to follow and arrest him, and, if he resisted, to put him to death. These instructions were carried out and Parthamasiris was slain, as a recent historian says, "brutally."

Cruel and brutal acts are frequently successful at any rate for a time. Trajan's "sharp and sudden blow" was effective, and produced the prompt and

complete submission of Armenia. No resistance was made. It could not, perhaps, much matter to the bulk of the inhabitants whether a Parthian prince or a Roman proconsul governed them. Trajan found no difficulty in carrying out his intention of absorbing Armenia into the empire. The two Armenias—the Greater and the Less—were united together, placed under a Roman governor, and reduced into the form of a province.

Attention was then turned to the neighbouring countries. Friendly relations were established with Archelaus, king of the Bosporus and Maeotis, and gifts were sent him in return for those which his envoys had brought to Trajan. A new king was given to the Albanians. Alliances were concluded with the Iberi Sarmatae (which, and even with the Hunni to the north of the Caucasus and Bosphorus. These names recalled to the Romans the glorious times of the great Pompey, and made it evident to them that Roman influence was now paramount in the entire region between the Caucasus, the Caspian, and the Araxes.

Still, the Emperor viewed what he had achieved as a mere prelude to what he was next on achieving. It was Parthia, not Armenia, against which his expedition had been really aimed. Accordingly, having arranged matters in the north-east, and set garrisons in the principal Armenian strongholds, he made a counter-movement towards the south-west, on which side Parthia seemed to be most assailable. Stationing himself at Satala, the capital of the province of Osrhoene, which was still administered by a Parthian

vassal bearing the usual name of Mannus, he partly terrified, partly induced that sturdy prince into submission, after which he entered into negotiations with Spornices, phylarch of Anthemusia, Mannus, an Arabian chieftain, and Manisares, a Parthian satrap who had a quarrel of his own with Chosroes. Having drawn these chiefs to his side, he commenced his attack on the great Parthian kingdom by a double movement. Part of his troops marched southward, by the route which Crassus had followed and made themselves masters of the tract known as Arthemusia, or that between the Euphrates and the Khabour; part proceeded eastward against Batnæ, Nisibis, and Corduene, or the country of the Kurds. No serious resistance was offered to the invaders on either route. Chosroes had withdrawn his forces to the further side of the Tigris, and left the defence of the provinces to his vassals, who were for the most part too weak to venture on opposing the march of a well-appointed Roman army. By the end of the year the whole tract between the Euphrates and the Tigris, as far south as the town of Singara and the modern range of Sinjar, had been overrun and occupied. Upper Mesopotamia, in the broadest sense of the term, had become Roman, and the conqueror, pursuing the system which he had resolved on adopting from the first, absorbed the newly won territory into the empire and made Mesopotamia a Roman province. At Rome these successes were greeted with enthusiasm. Medals were struck, on which the subdued countries were represented as prostrate under the feet of their conqueror, and the Senate conferred on him the titles,

which now appear upon his coins of "Armeniacus" and "Parthicus."

As winter approached, the Emperor quitted his army, and retired to Pessinus or Antioch, leaving his generals to maintain possession of the conquered regions, and giving them very special instructions with respect to the preparations that they were to make for the campaign of the ensuing year. As Trajan had resolved not to attempt the passage through the desert which intervenes between the Sinjar range and Babylonia, the crossing of the Tigris would be the first important operation to be accomplished. But the banks of the Tigris were, as Trajan knew, very deficient in wood, or at any rate in wood suitable for the construction of such boats as were required for the building of a bridge across the river. He therefore gave orders that, during the winter, a large fleet should be prepared at Nisibis, the head-quarters of the army, where timber was excellent and abundant, so constructed that the vessels could be readily taken to pieces and put together again. These when the spring came were conveyed in waggons to the western bank of the Tigris, probably at the point where it debouches from the mountains upon the low country a little above Jezireh. Trajan and his army accompanied them, meeting with no resistance until they reached the river and began their preparations for passing it. Then, however, the inhabitants of the opposite bank—not regular soldiers but brave mountaineers—gathered together in force, to dispute the passage. It was only by launching a number of his boats at

different points across the companies of heavy armed and archers, which advanced into mid-stream and engaged the enemy, while at the same time they threatened to land at many different points, that Trajan was able slowly and with difficulty to complete his construction, and finally bridge the river. His troops then effected their passage, the enemy dispersing, and the Emperor rapidly overran the whole of the rich country of Adiabene, between the river and the hills, occupying in succession Nineveh, Arbela, and Gaugamela, and nowhere meeting with any resistance. Chosroes remained deaf to all entreaties that he would draw his enemy further away from his base of operations, and not sacrifice his own resources. Meharsapes, the eunuch or subject-king of Adiabene, who had hoped to be able to defend the line of the Tigris, finding that forced, appears to have despaired, and withdrew from the struggle. One after another the forts and strongholds of the district were taken and occupied. Adenystrae, a place of great strength, was captured by a small knot of Roman prisoners who, when they found their friends near, rose upon the garrison, killed the commandant, and opened the gates to their countrymen. In a few weeks all Assyria, the heart of the ancient Assyria, was conquered, and a third province was added to the empire.

It might now have been expected that the Roman army would advance directly upon Ctesiphon. The way was open; and Trajan might well have anticipated, as Napoleon did in 1812, that the capture of the enemy's main capital would conclude the war

But for reasons that are not quite clear to us, the Emperor determined otherwise. Having repassed the Tigris into Mesopotamia, he took Hatra, one of the most considerable towns of the Middle Mesopotamian region, and, crossing to the Euphrates, visited the bitumen pits at Hit, so famous in the world's history whence the march was easy to Babylon. As still no enemy showed himself, Babylon was approached, invested and taken—so far as appears—without a blow being struck. Seleucia soon afterwards submitted, and it only remained to attack and reduce the capital in order to have complete possession of the country watered by the two rivers. Here a fleet was again necessary, and Trajan accordingly, transported the flotilla, which he had taken care to have in readiness on the Euphrates, across the narrow tract between the streams in N. at 33° on rollers, and launched it upon the Tigris. He was prepared for a vigorous resistance, but once more found himself unopposed. Ctesiphon opened its gates to him. The king, some time previously evacuated it, with his family and his chief treasures, withdrawing further into the interior of his vast empire and seeking to wear out his assailant by means of distance, natural obstacles, and guerilla warfare. The tactics pursued resemble those which have not uncommonly been adopted by a comparatively weak enemy when attacked by superior force, and remind us of the method by which Ioanthyrsus successfully defended Scythia against Darius Hystaspis in the sixth century B.C., and by which the Russian Alexander baffled the Great Napoleon. It lay at our forefathers' grand

fathers. But Trajan may be excused if he took his enemy's retreat for entire withdrawal from the contest, and the apathy of the Western provinces for the complete subjugation of the empire. Ctesiphon was his, Babylon was his, Susa, the old capital of the Achaemenidæ, was his, the war might be regarded as over, and so not troubling himself to pursue his flying foe into the remote and barbarous regions of the far East, he proceeded to enjoy his triumph, embarked on a pleasure voyage down the Tigris, and even launched his barks upon the waters of the Persian Gulf. The career of Alexander the Great presented itself vividly to his imagination, and he wished to think that at last he could not have to reach the limits which had been attained by the Macedonian. He speculated indeed, however, with respect to India, and may have contemplated sending an expedition there, when he had time to settle and arrange his Parthian conquests and to place Mesopotamian affairs on a satisfactory footing. No suspicion seems ever to have crossed his mind that the conquests which he had so rapidly effected were insecure—no premonition of coming trouble appears to have disturbed his self-complacency. In a fool's paradise he dreamed away the closing months of the summer of 116 A.D., and was still fancy floating on the waters of the South-to-Sea when intelligence of a startling character was suddenly brought to him.

Revolt had broken out in his rear. At Seleucia, at Hatra, at Nisibis, at Lusius, the natives had flown to arms, had ejected the Roman garrisons from the cities, or in some instances massacred them. His whole line

of retreat was beset by foes and he ran a great risk of having his return cut off and of perishing in the distant regions which he had invaded. The occasion called for the most active exertions and for the greatest energy; fortunately for the Romans, Trajan was equal to it. Forthwith, he hastened northwards, while he issued peremptory orders to his generals that they should everywhere take the most active measures against the rebels, and do their utmost to check the spread of insurrection. The chastisement of Seleucia was entrusted to Julius Claras and Julius Alexander, who stormed the city, and ruthlessly delivered it to the flames. Lucius Quietus succeeded in recovering Nisibis, and punished its rebellion in the same way. He also pillaged and burnt Edessa. Maximus, however, one of Trajan's most trusted officers, on coming to an engagement with the enemy, was defeated and slain. A Roman army with its legate was cut to pieces. Trajan himself, having returned to Ctesiphon and made himself acquainted with the whole condition of affairs, woke up from his dream of an easy conquest and saw that a complete change of policy was necessary. Parthia must not be treated like Armenia and Mesopotamia; its people must be humoured and conciliated. A native king and a show of independence must be allowed them. Accordingly, he selected a certain Parthamaspates, a man of Arsacid descent, who had embraced the side of Rome in the recent struggle, and summoning the Parthians of the capital and its neighbourhood to a great meeting near Ctesiphon, he produced before them the individual whom he favoured,

commended him to their loyal affection in a speech of considerable length, and, after magnifying somewhat unduly the splendour of his own achievements, placed the diadem with his own hand upon his brow. He then commenced his retreat. Taking the direct line through Mesopotamia, he marched in the first instance upon Hatra, one of the towns which had revolted from him, and had not yet been reduced. The place was strong, but strongly fortified. It lay in the desert between the Tigris and Euphrates, nearer to the former, and was protected, by the scantiness of its waters and the unproductiveness of the region around, from attack except by a strong force. Ten men battered down a portion of the wall, and attempted to enter by the breach, but his companions with a hooded tepee and he himself leaving rashly approached too near the walls was in the greatest danger of being wounded. The horseman nearest to him was actually struck by an arrow at a gallop. After this the repulse did not last long. As autumn approached, the weather broke up, and the besieged pressed, with rain and wind at their back. It was believed that whenever the besiegers proceeded to the assault the fury of the elements increased on a sudden. Moreover a plague of insects set in. Gnats and flies tormented the soldiers every moment of their time and every part of their duties. Under these circumstances the Emperor felt compelled to relinquish the siege and beat a retreat. He retired through Mesopotamia upon Syria, and took up his quarters at Antioch, having suffered, it would seem, a double defeat upon the way. At

[1] So Ammianus, "Roman Hist." p. 338.

Whatever the effects of his heavy toil and exertions began to show themselves. He fell sick, and quitting his army made an attempt to reach Rome but succumbed to his malady before he had proceeded very far, and died at Selinus, in Cilicia, August A.D. 117.

On the retirement of Trajan, the Parthian monarch, quitting Media, returned to Ctesiphon, expelled Parthamaspates without difficulty, and re-established his own rule over the kingdom which Trajan had overrun but had not reduced into the form of provinces. Armenia, however, Upper Mesopotamia, and Assyria or Adiabene were still held in force by the Romans and might probably have been maintained against any attack that Parthia could have made; but the new Emperor Hadrian, who had succeeded Trajan, regarded their retention as undesirable. But Hadrian was, as prefect of Syria, had been a near witness of Trajan's campaigns and possessed an intimate acquaintance with the general condition of the East. He was thoroughly convinced that the attempt of Trajan had been a mistake, and that the true policy for Rome was that laid down as a principle by Augustus: that the possessions of the empire should not be extended over the ancient and traditional limits. He resolved to withdraw the Roman eagles once more within the Euphrates, and to relinquish the newly-acquired provinces, of which so great a boast had been made—Armenia, Mesopotamia, Adiabene. It is generally answered by modern historians that the resolution was a wise one. There was no security against the Euphrates-line save Dione Mericeque with excellent judgment "a wall of Roman veterans could

take root, while the expense of maintaining them would have been utterly exhausting.[1] As far as the Euphrates Greek colonisation had so covered the original Asiatic mass as to render it semi-European, and so to prepare it to a large extent for the reception of Roman and Roman principles of government. Beyond, the Greek influence had been too weak to produce much effect. Orientalism here prevailed, and Western institutions, if introduced, would have ranged themselves in an alien soil, where they could only have withered and died. Even apart from this, the Roman Empire was already so large as to be unwieldy and to endanger its continued cohesion. The chiefs of provinces east of the Euphrates would have been so far removed from the seat of government as to be practically exempt from effectual control and supervision. They would have had enormous forces of men and money at their command, and have been under a perpetual temptation to revolt and endeavour to secure for themselves an independent position. The garrisoning moreover of such extensive countries would have been a severe drain upon the military resources of the empire, and would have exercised a demoralising influence upon the soldiery, such as was already felt to some extent with regard to the legions quartered in Syria. Altogether, it is clear that the course pursued by Hadrian in contracting once more the eastern limits of the empire was a prudent one, and entitles the prince who adopted it not only to the praise of "moderation," but to that of positive insight and sagacity.

[1] "Roman Empire," vol. viii. p. 192.

The evacuation of the conquered countries brought about a return to the condition of things in the East which had prevailed ever since the time of Augustus. Rome and Parthia resumed their ancient boundaries. Armenia reverted to its old condition of a kingdom nominally independent but too weak to stand alone and necessarily leaning on external support, at one time practically dependent on Rome, at another on Parthia. Its first ruler, after it ceased to be a Roman province, was Parthamasiris, to whom Hadrian seems to have handed it over, and to whose appointment Chosroës must have acquiesced. Chosroës could not but be well disposed towards the ruler who, without being compelled to do so by a defeat, had restored to Parthia the two most important and valuable of her provinces; and the consolidation of his power in them probably gave him ample occupation, and made him satisfied to have a time of repose from external troubles. He seems to have continued on friendly terms with Hadrian during the remainder of his life. Once only, in A.D. 123, was the good understanding threatened. The exact causes of complaint have not come down to us; but it appears that in that year rumours of an intended Parthian invasion reached the Emperor at Athens, and led to Hadrian's journey to the far East, in which, by his personal influence and his measures, he averted the danger. An interview was held between the two monarchs upon the frontier, and explanations were given and received which both parties regarded as satisfactory. The Parthian prince gave up his project of invading the peaceful Rome, and the two empires continued, not only during the rest of the

reign of Chosroes but till some time after the death of Hadrian, on terms of friendship with Rome. Hadrian went so far as to restore to Chosroes about A.D. 129 a daughter who had been taken prisoner at Susa by the generals of Trajan fourteen years before and had remained at Rome in captivity, and he is even said to have promised the restoration of the golden throne

COINS OF VOLOGASES II

COIN OF MITHRADATES V COIN OF ARTABANUS V

captured at the same time, on which the Parthians set a special value.

Chosroes, during his later years, had to contend with a pretender to his throne who bore the name, so common at this time, of Vologases. The Parthian empire showed, more and more as time went on, a tendency to disintegration, and there is reason to believe that during the space commonly assigned to Chosroes (A.D. 108–130) different monarchs reigned,

not infrequently in different parts of Parthia at the same time. The coins of Vologases II run parallel for many years with those of Chosroes. A coin of a Mithridates, and another of an Artabanus, fall into the same interval. The classical writers make no mention of these rival kings, and the native remains are so scanty that it is impossible to draw any continuous narrative from them. We can only say, generally, that Parthia has entered the period of her decadence, and that, even apart from foreign attack, she would of herself have probably expired within a little more than a century.

XIX.

VOLOGASES II. AND ANTONINUS PIUS.—VOLOGASES III. AND VERUS.

THE Volognases who had for so many years disputed the crown with Chosroes, appears, on the decease of the latter, to have been generally acknowledged as king. He was an aged prince, indisposed to any unnecessary exertion, and quite content to continue on the friendly terms with Rome which had been established under his predecessor. He had not however, been settled more than three years upon the throne, when heavy blows came upon him from an unexpected quarter. Pharasmanes, who enjoyed the sovereignty of Iberia under Roman protection but chafed at his dependent position, and had private grounds of quarrel with Hadrian, in the year A.D. 133, suddenly threw the whole of the East into a blaze. Inviting into Asia a great horde of the northern barbarians from the tracts beyond the Caucasus, he induced them to precipitate themselves upon Armenia, Cappadocia, and Media Atropatene, which was once more a dependency of Parthia, and to carry fire and sword into the midst of the eastern regions. Vologases at once complained to Rome of the injury

done him by her feudatory, and requested assistance; but Hadrian regarded the event as too insignificant a region as unimportant, and, satisfied that Cappadocia would be sufficiently protected by its governor, who was Arrian the historian of Alexander, he left Vologases to struggle with his difficulties as he best might. The aged monarch, under these circumstances, had recourse to an expedient at once impolitic and disgraceful: he bribed the hordes of Alans which had invaded his province, to quit the country and turn their arms in another direction. Such a policy, though occasionally adopted by the Romans themselves, can never be other than mistaken and ruinous. Once entered upon, it is almost certain to be continued and to bring about at once the exhaustion and the degradation of the people that condescends to it.

It is not perhaps surprising that Hadrian, always studious of peace, abstained from taking any active part in the Alanic war; but it certainly seems strange that instead of inflicting a severe punishment on Pharasmanes for his reckless action in introducing the barbarians into Asia, and actually setting them loose upon the empire he should have shortly afterwards loaded him with honours and benefits. He summoned him indeed to Rome, to answer for his conduct; but, having done this, accepted his explanations, condoned his crimes, and not only so, but rewarded him by an enlargement of his dominions, and by various other marks of favour. He permitted him to sacrifice in the Capitol, placed his equestrian statue in the temple of Bellona, and was present at a sham fight in which the Iberian monarch, his son, and his chief nobles

exhibited their skill and prowess. It is not likely that Vologases can have been much pleased at these results of his enterprise, but he seems to have submitted to them without a murmur. And when Hadrian died in A.D. 138 and was succeeded by his adopted son, Titus Aelius, better known as Antoninus Pius, he sent to Rome an embassy of congratulation, and presented his Roman brother with a crown of gold. The medal, which records this event was struck in the first year of Antoninus, and exhibits on the reverse a female figure holding a bow and quiver in the left hand, and with the right presenting a crown to a king standing before her. The inscription is PARTHIA.

Having thus, as he thought, secured the good-will of the new monarch by a well-timed compliment, Vologases ventured on a remonstrance upon him with an unpleasant demand. Hadrian, in a moment of weakness had promised that the provinces captured by Trajan in his great expedition should be given back to its proper owners; but finding that the act would be unpalatable to his subjects had delayed the performance of his promise, and finally dealt with the matter indirectly. Vologases hoped that his successor might be more accommodating, and instructed his envoys to bring the matter before Antoninus, to remind him of Hadrian's pledged word, and make a formal request for the delivery to them of the much-prized relic. But Antoninus was as much averse to relinquishing the trophy as his predecessor had been, and positively refused to grant the request made of him. The envoys had to return *re infecta*, and to report to their master that for the present at any

rate all hope must be laid aside of recovering the ancient dominion of Arsacid sovereignty.

The remainder of the reign of Vologases II was tranquil and unmarked by any striking incident. No pretensions were put forward by the Parthians with respect to Armenia, to which, probably on the death of Parthamaspates, Rome was suffered without protest, to appoint a king of her own. No further attempt was made to obtain the surrender of the golden throne. The coolness between the two states, which had followed on Antonine's recognition of the disloyal performed by Vologases merely to keep the rival powers apart and to prevent occasions of collision, while Antonine's truly peaceful policy preserved Parthia even from internal disturbance and allowed the successor of Chosroes to enjoy his throne, unthreatened by any pretender for the comparatively long term of nineteen years, A.D. 130 to 149. The aged monarch left his crown to a successor of the same name as himself, who was probably his son, though of this there is no direct evidence.

The third Vologases succeeded to the Parthian throne either in A.D. 147 or 148. He took the same title as his predecessor, but added to it the epithet Nikator, "the victorious," or "Vologases, King of Kings" (מלכא מלכין בלש). "Vologases, Arsaces, King of Kings" (אשך מלכן מלכא). The dates on his coins extend from A.D. 148 to A.D. 191, showing that he held the throne for the long space of forty-two years. During the earlier portion of the time A.D. 148–161 he was contemporary with Antoninus Pius, and though discontented with the existence of Parthian influence in Armenia

and meditating a war with Rome on the account he seemed himself to be persuaded of letters from the pretended Emperor, to keep the peace as long as he occupied the Imperial throne, and to defer his contemplated outbreak until the reign of his successor. On the death of Antoninus, however, he was not both to be restrained. But at once took the field, and marching an army suddenly into Armenia, carried all before him, expelled Sohæmus, Rome's vassal and creature, from the kingdom, and placed upon the throne a *protégé* of his own, a certain Tigranes, said

COIN OF VOLOGASES III.

to the old royal stock, whose name recalled to the Armenians the period of their greatest glory. The Roman governors of the adjacent provinces learnt with surprise and alarm that Armenia was attached from the empire, and Severianus, prefect of Cappadocia, the nearest in the scale of military grades, a man of an impetuous disposition, being a Gaul by birth, hurried to the scene at the head of a single legion, partly moved by his own hot temper, partly yielding to the persuasions of a pseudo-prophet of those parts named Alexander, who promised him a signal victory. But

the result [illegible] the prophecy. Scarcely had Sextius [illegible] to Armenia, when he found himself in the presence of a superior force under the command of a Parthian general called Chosroes, and was under the necessity of throwing himself into the town of Elegia where he was immediately besieged and blockaded. Though he offered a strenuous resistance, it was in vain. His troops were not of good quality, and, unable to break through the lines which surrounded them, they were in a short time shot down by the Parthian archers and perished almost to a man. Severianus shared their fate, and the Parthians obtained a success which was paralleled with that of Varus against Arminius or of Arminius against Varus. Their mastery over Armenia was confirmed, and the Roman provinces were also watched by their armies. Their cavalry crossed the Euphrates and marched into Syria, where they obtained a similar success. At last Cæcilius Bassus, the proconsul, gathered together the forces of his province and gave battle to the invaders, but was repulsed. The situation became nearly such as had obtained after the defeat of Crassus, or when Pacorus and Labienus, in the year 40 carried ravage and ruin over the region between the Euphrates and the Orontes. The Parthians passed from Syria into Palestine, and the whole of the Roman East seemed to be open to them. Intelligence of what had happened was quickly carried to Rome, and threw the Senate into consternation. Arminius felt that he could not be spared from Italy but determined to represent him in the East and made new haste to the

[illegible] gathered [illegible] Verus, however, was [illegible] presents [illegible] be offered on his visit to Apulia. Here [illegible] at a certain place in Syria, [illegible] settled himself in the best [illegible] which had [illegible] been built up to [illegible] and [illegible] Euphrates over the [illegible] river to his head-quarters. Fortunately for Rome there were among the several [illegible] of the empire two especially, Statius Priscus, Avidius Cassius, and Marcus Verus, [illegible] even before the arrival of Verus, but by [illegible] had [illegible] assistance. He, [illegible] Priscus, [illegible] the Syrian [illegible] into a state of order and [illegible] with them the [illegible] of Verus, [illegible] finally found himself [illegible] to take the [illegible]. In [illegible] he fought a great battle with the Parthians, [illegible] them entirely from across the Euphrates. Meanwhile, Statius Priscus and Martius Verus had [illegible] the recovery of Armenia. Statius had [illegible] without a check from the frontier to the capital Artaxata, had taken the city and burnt it to the ground, after which he built a new city, which he strongly garrisoned with Roman troops, and [illegible] to Rome that Armenia was now ready to receive back its expelled prince Sohæmus. Soæmus upon this returned, and, though some further disturbances were made by the anti-Roman party, yet these were successfully dealt with chiefly by Martius Verus, and in a short time the Roman supremacy was recognised as [illegible] Asia, and the entire country brought into a state of tranquillity

The success which had attended the first rush to arms [illegible] was thus completely neutralised. In the space of two years Rome had made good all her losses and she was at last able to maintain the position in Western Asia which she had acquired by the victories of Trajan. But the ambitious projects, into whose hands the conduct of the war had fallen through the incapacity of Verus, were far from satisfactory. The main recovery of what had been lost [illegible] rather than positive gains accrued thereby. In the circumstances of the time military distinction was more coveted than any other and was looked upon as paving a path to the very highest honours. The successful general became, as a matter of course, by virtue of his position, a candidate for the Imperial dignity. If, under the great Napoleon, every conscript felt that he carried a marshal's *bâton* in his knapsack at Caserne, under the Middle Empire, was every civil servant's ambition persuaded that each step on the path of victory brought him sensibly nearer the throne. Of all the officers engaged in the Parthian war nominally under Verus the most capable and the most ambitious was Avidius Cassius. Sprung from the family of the great Liberator, who had contended for the supreme power in the state with Augustus and Antony, he had a hereditary bias towards pushing himself to the front and might be counted upon to act on any occasion which for one should put in his way. His position in Syria gave him a special opportunity. After his first successes against Vologaeses, Avidius had made him a sort of [illegible] and, having thus

perfect [illegible] resolved to carry the war into the enemy's country, and set off by [illegible] or even outdo the achievements of Trajan half a century earlier. No continuous history of his campaign has reached our time, but from the fragmentary notices of it which are still extant we may gather a good general idea of its course and character. Crossing the Euphrates into Mesopotamia at Zeugma, the most important of the Roman stations upon the river, he pressed first to Nicephorium, near the junction of the Belik with the Euphrates, and thence marched his way down the course of the stream to Sura, previously Sippara and Babylon. At Sura a battle was fought, in which the Romans were victorious, but it was after this that the great success took place which covered Cassius with glory. The vast city of Seleucia upon the Tigris, which had at the time a population of four hundred thousand souls, was besieged, taken, and burnt to punish an act of open treason of the inhabitants. Ctesiphon, upon the opposite bank of the river, the summer residence of the Parthian kings, was occupied, and the royal palace there situated was pillaged and levelled with the ground. The various fanes and temples were stripped of their treasures; and search was made for buried riches in all the places which were thought likely to have been utilized, the result being that an immense booty was carried off. The Parthians, worsted in every encounter, after a time ceased to resist, and all the conquests made by Trajan, and relinquished by Hadrian, were recovered. Further, an expedition was made into the Zagros mountain tract, and a portion of

it, considered to be within the limits of Media, and never yet possessed by Rome, was occupied. Aurelius owed it to the valour and good fortune of his general that he was thus entitled to add to the epithets of "Armeniacus" and "Parthicus," which he had already assumed, the further and wholly novel epithet of "Medicus."

The victories of Avidius Cassius, unlike those of Trajan, were followed by no reverses, and they had further the effect, denied to Trajan's, of making the permanent addition of a large tract to the Roman Empire. When Vologases, after five years of unsuccessful warfare, finally sued for peace to his too powerful antagonist, he was compelled to surrender, as the price of it, the extensive and valuable country of Western Mesopotamia. The entire region between the Euphrates and the Khabour passed under the dominion of Rome at this time, and though not formally made into a province, became wholly lost to Parthia. The coins of the Greek cities within the area bear henceforth on the obverse the head of a Roman emperor, and on the reverse some local token or legend; every trace of Parthian influence is removed from them.

But if Rome thus carried off all the honours of the war with Vologases III., still she did not escape the Nemesis which usually attends upon the over fortunate. During its stay in the marshy regions of Lower Mesopotamia the army of Cassius was deeply infected with the germs of a strange and terrible malady, which clung to it on its return, and was widely disseminated among the whole line of the

retreat. The superstition of the soldiers assigned to the pestilence a supernatural origin. It had crept forth, they said, from a subterranean cell of a golden coffer in the temple of the Comæan Artemis at Seleucia, during the time that a portion of the army was engaged in plundering the temple treasures. Placed there in primeval times by the spell of the Chaldæans, it raged with the more virulence on account of its long confinement and sixty thousand of the Parthians are said to have been infected with it by Roman hands. Every town that lay upon the route of the returning army was visited by it, and from these centres it diverged in every direction, east and west, and north and south into the adjacent districts. At Rome, the number of victims amounted to tens of thousands. "Not the vulgar herd of the Suburra only, the usual victims of a pestilence, were stricken, but many of the highest rank also suffered."[1] According to Orosius in Italy generally the whole country was so devastated that the villas, towns, and fields were everywhere left without inhabitant or cultivation, and fell to ruin or relapsed into wilderness. The army suffered especially, and is said to have been almost annihilated. In the provinces more than half the population was carried off, and the pestilence, overstepping the Alps, spread as far as the Rhine and the Atlantic Ocean.[2]

The remainder of the reign of Vologases III was uneventful. He continued to occupy the Parthian

[1] Merivale, "Roman Empire," vol. viii. p. 233.
[2] Oros. Hist. lib. vii. c. 15.

throne until A.D. 191, but took no further part in affairs as we know, in any military operations. Once only does he seem to have been so far roused from his inaction as to contemplate resuming the struggle against his powerful enemy. This was in A.D. 174 or 175, when, Aurelius being detained upon the Danube by the immediate invasion of Avidius Cassius, the latter threatened to break into open rebellion, and the prospect of a Roman civil war seemed to offer a chance of Parthia being able to re-assert herself. But the opportunity passed before Vologases could bring himself to make any serious movement. The revolt of Cassius collapsed almost as soon as it was broken out, and the East returned to its normal condition. Vologases repented of his warlike intentions, and when in A.D. 176 Aurelius visited Syria, sent ambassadors to him with friendly assurances, who were received with favour.

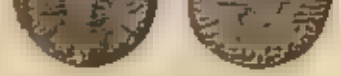
Four years later the reign of the philosophic Emperor came to an end, and the Imperial power passed into the hands of his weak and unworthy son Lucius Aurelius Commodus. A second opportunity for an aggressive movement offered itself, but again Vologases resisted the temptation to rush into hostilities, and remained passive within the limits of his own dominions. The reign of Commodus (A.D. 180–192) was, from first to last, untroubled by any Parthian outbreak. Vologases was probably by this time an old man, since he had held the Parthian throne for thirty-two years when Commodus succeeded his father, and may naturally have been disinclined to further warlike exertion. Rome was

therefore still allowed to maintain her Mesopotamian conquests unchallenged, and when Vologeses died [illegible] the condition of the empire remained as established by Verus in A.D. 165.

XV

VOLOGASES IV. AND SEVERUS

The third Vologases was succeeded by another prince of the same name who is usually regarded as his son, though there is no distinct evidence of the fact. His coins, which generally present his full face upon their obverse, instead of the customary profile, have dates which run from A.D. 191 to 208. He thus appears to have been contemporary with the Roman



COIN OF VOLOGASES IV.

Emperors—Commodus, Pertinax, Didius Julianus, Pescennius Niger and Septimius Severus. The great Parthian war of Severus fell entirely within his reign, and it is as the antagonist of this distinguished prince that he is chiefly known to history.

It was very shortly after the accession of Vologases IV. that the officers of the Court of Commodus,

unable any longer to endure his excesses and cruelties conspired against the unworthy son of the good Aurelius and assassinated him in his bed chamber. This murder was soon followed by another — that of the virtuous, but perhaps over-strict, Pertinax. The Praetorians, after this, put up the office of Roman Emperor to public auction, and knocked it down to Didius Julianus, a rich senator, who is said to have paid for his purchase less than three millions of our money. But this ill-gotten possession, the patience of the legions and throughout the entire empire into confusion. In three places—in Britain, in Pannonia, and in Syria—revolt broke out and the soldiers invested their respective leaders Clodius Albinus, Septimius Severus, and Pescennius Niger, with the purple. Niger, who, as prefect of Syria, held the second dignity in the empire, imagined that his elevation would not be disputed, and instead of straining every nerve to raise forces and strengthen himself by alliances, declined at first the offers of assistance made him by various Parthian tetrarchs, and remained inactive in the East, expecting the Senate's confirmation of his appointment. But the unpleasant intelligence soon reached him that Septimius Severus, proclaimed Emperor in Pannonia and acknowledged at Rome was on his way to Syria, determined to dispute with him the prize, where he had somewhat rashly thought himself assured. Under these changed circumstances, Niger felt compelled to alter his own policy and to implore the assistance which so shortly before he had rejected. Towards the close of the year A.D. 193 he despatched envoys

to the courts of the chief princes beyond the Euphrates and especially to the kings of Armenia Parthia and Hatra, urging them to send contingents to his assistance as soon as possible. The Armenian monarch—Vologases, the son of Saratrakes—made answer that it was not his intention to ally himself with either side; he should stand aloof from the conflict and keep the whole kingdom ready for any event that might happen. The reply from the Parthian Vologases was more favourable. He could not send troops at once, he said, as his army was in bad need of rest, but he would make it his business to have a strong force ready to march as soon as possible. Meanwhile a body of Hatra went further even than his promise, and actually despatched to Nagite and a body of archers which reached his camp in safety and took part in the war. Vologases IV must have given his sanction to this movement on the part of his feudatory who could scarcely have ventured on such a proceeding against the will of his lord paramount. Still Vologases was not prepared to commit himself to a reservedly to either side in the impending conflict; and he refrained from taking any active steps or furthering the projected design to invest an army with which alone the fortune of war would rest.

The struggle between the rival Emperors was soon terminated. Niger passed from Asia into Europe and took up a position near Byzantium, but having suffered a defeat at Cyzicus was soon forced to fall back upon his reserves, and, passing through Asia Minor gave his adversary battle for the second time

near Issus, where his army was completely routed, and he himself captured and put to death. Meanwhile however the citizens of the East had flown to arms. Parthia, always subjective Mesopotamia, all Osroëne revolted from the dominion of the Romans; Arabs and Adiabeni rose in their country, and had even laid siege to Nisibis, which was the key-point of the Roman power in the East. Their kindred tribes from the further side of the Euphrates, particularly the people of Atrapene, had assisted them and taken part in the attack. The first object of Severus after the defeat and death of Niger was to raise the siege, and to chastise the rebels with their allies and abettors. He marched hastily to Nisibis, defeated the combined Arabs and Adiabeni, relieved the distressed garrison, and took up his winter quarters at the place. He then proceeded to reduce Mesopotamia. The tribal lords sought to screen his resentment by representing that they had taken up arms, not against him or any but the Romans generally but against Niger his rival and foe, whom they had endeavoured to distress for Severus's benefit. They professed a readiness to surrender the Romans whom they had taken prisoners, and such portion of the Roman spoil as remained still in their hands: but it was observed that they said nothing about giving up the strongholds that they had taken, or about restoring the provinces of Roman dominion. On the contrary they put forward a demand that the Roman troops should be withdrawn from their land, and that their own scheme should be accepted in the future. Severus was not prepared to accept

these terms or to sue for the retreat of Terentius. His immediate adversaries—the kings of Osroëne, Adiabene and Hatra—were of small account and he might expect to defeat them without difficulty. Even if the Parthian monarch espoused the cause of his feudatories, he was not disposed to cross swords with him. The expeditions of Trajan and Avidius Cassius had done much to diminish the terror of the Parthian name, and to arm against Rome the East presented itself as the quarter in which without any serious danger the greatest glory was to be won.

Accordingly the Emperor rejected the Mesopotamian proposals and applied himself to the task of reducing their country to complete subjection. From the central position of Nisibis, where he himself remained, he sent out his forces under his three best commanders—Laterianus, Candidus, and Lætus—in three directions with orders to carry fire and sword through the entire region and to re-establish everywhere the Imperial authority. His commands were executed. Resistance was everywhere crushed, the old administration was restored, and Nisibis, raised to the dignity of a Roman colony, once more became the metropolis of the country. Nor was Severus contented with the mere restoration of the Roman power. He caused his troops to cross the Tigris into Adiabene, and though the inhabitants offered a stout resistance succeeded in overrunning the district and occupying it. Further progresses and further conquests would probably have followed, but the attitude of Albinus in the West made it imperative on Severus to quit these distant wilds and return to

his capital which was menaced on the side of Gaul by the commander of the Western legions. The Emperor met Niger and returned to Rome early in the year A.D. 196.

No sooner had he retired than the flames of war burst out more fiercely than before. Volagases renewed on his invasion by the threatened rise of a second province, poured his troops into Armenia, drove out the Roman garrisons, and overran the Legions into Mesopotamia, swept the Romans from the whole of that open country. Even the cities submitted themselves, except Nisibis, which was saved from capture by the courage and capacity of Lupus. According to Spartianus, the victorious Parthians not content with recovering Mesopotamia, even passed the Euphrates and spread themselves once more over the fertile plains of Northern Syria as they had come in the times of Pacorus and Labienus. Severus, engaged in his desultory contest with Albinus in the western side of the empire, could do nothing to relieve the pressure upon the east, and the Syrian provincials, unused to the Parthian mode of warfare, purchased by the payment of money a truce which might have come much cheaper if it had been, but Volagases frittered away his opportunity and at length the victory of Lyons set Severus free, and he could turn against Parthia the forces of Occidental affairs. In the summer of A.D. 197 he made a second Eastern expedition for the purpose of recovering his lost laurels, and of resolving the titles, which he had already assumed of "Arabicus and Adiabenicus." It is probable that in his second campaign he contented him-

[illegible] a desperate [illegible], and Trajan his hopes of reducing the whole Parthian Empire under the Roman yoke.

One of the most important points to be secured by an assailant of Parthia from the west was the friendship, or at any rate the neutrality, of the two kings of Armenia and Osrhoëne. Armenia had professed itself neutral in the quarrel between Severus and Niger [illegible], but had subsequently in some way or other offended the former, and, on his arrival in the East, was treated as hostile by the Roman general. The first intention of Severus was to [illegible] with his own troops in Armenia and to [illegible] her to [illegible]; but before the fortune of war had been tried, the Armenian monarch, Vologases, son of Sanatroeces, made overtures for peace, sent gifts and hostages, and assumed the attitude of a suppliant, and so wrought upon Severus that he not merely consented to conclude a treaty with him, but even granted him a certain portion of his dominions. The Arab king of Osrhoëne, who is called as usual Abgarus, [illegible] himself completely on the [illegible]. He made over to the Romans [illegible] of a large body of archers, whom he sent [illegible] to the Emperor, and accompanied [illegible] a number of his own sons, whom Severus was permitted to carry off as hostages. [illegible] that Severus had even to determine by which line of route he would advance against the Parthian monarch; he had taken up his quarters at [illegible], and made his preparations accordingly. He fixed on the line of the Euphrates, but at the same time masked his intention

by sending a strong body of troops under generals [illegible] to the Euphrates. Whether, as Crassus imagined, that river was the only attack would come from that quarter. Meanwhile, following the example of Trajan, he was causing a fleet to be built on the upper Mesopotamia, where timber was plentiful, and was preparing to march his main army down the left bank of the Euphrates, while his transports were [illegible] stores, to accompany the army. In this way he [illegible] that the neighborhood of Seleucia and Ctesiphon without suffering any loss or even the fatigue and danger and from the Parthians in a country where [illegible] controlled the cities of Babylonia and Seleucia, which were dreaded by [illegible] he must have appeared before the capital. His fleet which he could easily transfer from one river to the other by means of the great canals that traversed the alluvium would give him the complete command of the Tigris and enable him to attack the city on either side, or to cut entirely to invest it. Vologeses appears to have fought a desperate battle in defence of his capital, but, being defeated, shut himself up within its walls. The defences, however, were not strong enough, and, after a short siege, Seleucia was taken by assault without much difficulty, the king escaping with a few horsemen in the confusion of the capture. Thus the Parthian capital for [illegible] time within the space of eighty-two years fell into the hands of a foreign invader. On the first occasion it had opened its gates to the conqueror, and had experienced gentle treatment at the hands of a benignant emperor. On the second it had suffered cruelly. Now it

was to earn what extreme severity meant at the hands of a monarch whose character accorded with his name. The captured city was given up to massacre and pillage. The soldiers were allowed to plunder both the public and the private buildings at their pleasure. The precious metals accumulated in the royal treasury were seized, and the rich ornaments of the royal palace were taken from their places and carried off. All the adult male population was slaughtered, while the women and children, torn from their homes without consideration, were sold into captivity by the wholesale to the number of a hundred thousand.

Thus far the expedition of Severus had been completely successful. He stood where Trajan stood in A.D. 116, master of the whole low region between the Arabian desert and the Zagros mountains, lord of Mesopotamia, of Assyria, of Babylonia, of the entire tract watered by the two great rivers from the Armenian highlands to the shores of the Persian Gulf. What use would he make of his conquests? Would he, like Trajan, endeavour to retain them or would he, like the wiser Hadrian, relinquish them? He endeavoured to take an intermediate course. Recognising the fact that to retain the more southern districts was impossible, and that the more eastern portions of the Parthian Empire were beyond his reach, he on the other pursued the flying Vologases into the remote tracts to which he had taken refuge, not attempted to organise his southern conquests into provinces, but resolved at once to evacuate them. Notwithstanding the elaborate preparations which he had made for his invasion, and the care which he

[illegible] seems certain that when [illegible] the [illegible] of Heron he [illegible] diverged from his previous line of march and [illegible] coasting westward [illegible] under the walls of the city which had [illegible] him [illegible] to [illegible] and engaged in the siege. He [illegible] with [illegible] no [illegible] [illegible] of [illegible] [illegible] probably [illegible] [illegible] with complete success at [illegible] and [illegible] by them to [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] attack upon [illegible] [illegible] but the [illegible] [illegible] were not [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] town were [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] and [illegible] of enterprise [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] the [illegible] [illegible] brought [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] with heavy [illegible] the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] upon this [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

and for bringing it to a successful issue. It was not merely that his honour was concerned to exact from the resistance offered to him by what had always been regarded as no more than a second-rate town—his cupidity was also excited by reports of the rich treasures that were stored up in the city, and especially of those which the piety of successive generations had accumulated in the Temple of the Sun. He therefore, when his preparations were complete, once more put his troops in motion, and proceeded to renew the siege with a more efficient siege-train and a better appointed army than before. But the rebels met him with a determination equal to his own. They had a powerful cavalry which hung upon the skirts of his army and crippled his movements in every way, often retiring severe loss upon his foragers; they were excellent archers, and shot further and with greater force than the Romans; they possessed military engines of the most contemptible character, with which they hurled at their opponents a particular kind of fire, which did considerable damage, and created yet greater alarm. Stones believed to be meteoric in origin were hurled both against the Roman machines and against the persons with so direct that it is said to have been remarkable. A great number of the machines were burnt, and the workers were more frightened than hurt; the advantage to the defenders was still almost as great as the Romans persevered. The presence of the Emperor, who watched the combat from a lofty platform, encouraged every man to do his best; and at length it was announced that a practicable breach had been

effected in the outer wall of the place, and the soldiers were ready, and even eager, to be led at once to the assault. But now Severus hung back. By Roman usage a town taken by storm must be given up to the mercy, for the storm, of the plunderers, and thus, if the soldiers had their way, he would lose the great treasures on which his heart was set. He therefore refused to give the word, and resolved to wait a day and see whether the Hatrene would not now, under further resistance to a useless surrender, throw in the towel. The day was used. In the night the Hatrene, below the wall where it had been battered down and rebuilding the battlements, stood boldly on their defence. Severus saw that they had no intention of surrendering in contempt of his reserve of the next battle and commanded the soldiers to attack. But the legion of Mesopotamia refused. They probably considered the Emperor's motive. At any rate they were now ready to impute their loss of an object which but yesterday they might have attained to that end, and at all events not to lose a chance of plunder. Severus ordered his Asiatic auxiliaries to the attack, if they could not force an entrance, but with no better result than the slaughter of a vast number. At last he ordered the retreat to be sounded. The trumpet was false-toned, the first was not heard, and the second was heard with a groan, but hope was suddenly born once more in all hearts from the sight of a regiment of camels. Above all his army was thoroughly demoralised, and could not be depended on to carry out the orders given it. Severus turned off a band of his officers that he had by him, and bade them lead their own troops on whom he could place any reliance. The second

siege of Hatra by Severus lasted twenty days, and terminated in an ignominious withdrawal. Severus returned to Rome with a sum upon his military expenditure which was not required, as cancelled by all his previous successes.

Still a total disaster was escaped. Had Vologases been an active and energetic prince or had the spirit and tenacity of the Parthian nation been such as they characterised it, the result might have been widely different. The prolonged resistance of Hatra, the stronghold of the Romans, their increasing difficulties with respect to provisions, the injurious effect of the summer heat upon their unacclimated constitutions, would have presented a splendid opportunity to a prince of even a general of any boldness and capacity, indeed, to pursue the retreating enemy, to hang upon their flanks and upon their rear, to fall on their stragglers, to cut off their supplies, to harass and annoy them at ten thousand points, and render their withdrawal to their own territory a matter of extreme difficulty. A Sapor, or a Shah Abbas, might not improbably have annihilated the Imperial army, and the disaster of Carrhæ might have repeated itself at the distance of between two and three centuries. But Vologases IV was a very great descendant of the great Arsaces, and remained quiet and passive when the circumstances of the time called for the most strenuous action.

Yet it was the existence of Severus must be announced, for as for long as disastrous for Parthia. It appears for the third time within a

cost by the extreme weakness of the great Asiatic power. It took her such treasures as had escaped the cupidity of Avidius Cassius. It both exhausted and disgraced her. Moreover, it cost her a second and most valuable province. Severus was not content with fully re-establishing the Roman sway in Mesopotamia. He overstepped the Tigris and firmly planted Roman authority in the rich and fertile region between that river and the Zagros mountains. Henceforth the title of 'Adiabenicus' became no empty boast. Adiabene, or the tract between the two Zab rivers—the most productive and valuable part of the ancient Assyria—became a Roman dependency under Severus, and continued to be Roman for a little more than the destruction of the Parthian Empire. For the remainder of the time during which Parthia maintained her independence, the Roman standards were planted within less than two degrees of her capital.

Vologaesus remained for the space of about seven years, A.D. 197–198, after his defeat by Severus. Parthian history is for this interval a blank. The defence of national freedom and of the military spirit went on no doubt without a pause, and the power of Parthia must extraordinarily have grown less and less. No great disasters arose, nor does there was probably much to chronicle of the quarrels of rival warlords or of the struggle of Parthia to its fall. Rome abstained from further attack, content it would seem with the glory which she had won, and a great cloud brooded the storm in which Parthian nationality was to perish.

XXI

ARTABANUS IV AND CARACALLA—THE LAST WAR WITH ROME—DEFEAT OF MACRINUS

THE death of Vologases IV was immediately followed by a dispute between his two sons, Vologases V and Artabanus IV, for the succession. We do not know which was the elder, but it would seem

that at first the superiority in the struggle rested with Vologases, who was recognised by the Romans as sole king in A.D. 213 and must have then ruled in the western capital Ctesiphon. Afterwards Artabanus acquired the preponderance, and from the year A.D. 216 we find no more mention of Vologases by the classical writers. It is Artabanus who negotiates with Caracalla, who is treacherously

attacked by him, who contends with Macrinus, and is ultimately defeated and slain by the founder of the New Persian monarchy Artaxerxes. Similarly, the Persian historians ignore Vologases altogether, and represent the contest for empire, which once more carried Persia to the front, as one between Ardeshir and Ardevan. Still, the Parthian coins show that Vologases, equally with his brother, both claimed and exercised sovereignty in Parthia to the close of the kingdom. The probability would therefore appear to be that about A.D. 216 a partition of the kingdom was amicably made, and that while Artabanus reigned over the western provinces, the eastern were ceded to Vologases.

It was while the struggle between the two brothers continued that the Emperor Severus died, and the period of tranquillity inaugurated by him, on his return from the East in A.D. 198, came to an end. His son and successor, Caracallus, a weak and vain prince, nourished an immoderate ambition, and was scarcely seated on the throne when he let it be known that in his own judgment he was a second Alexander, and that he was bent on imitating the marvellous exploits of that mighty hero. He adopted the Macedonian costume, formed his best troops into a "Macedonian phalanx," made the captains of the phalanx take the names of Alexander's best generals, and caused statues to be made with a double head, presenting the countenance of Alexander on one side and his own upon the other. As Alexander he was bound to conquer the East, and as early as his second year, he began

his predetermined plans, resolved to summon Ugarus, the boundary monarch of Osrhoene, or north-western Mesopotamia, to his presence, he seized upon his person, committed him to prison, dismembered his territories, annexed and reduced Osrhoene into the form of a Roman province. Soon afterwards he attempted to repeat the treacherous acts to Armenia; but although the Armenian king was weak enough to fall into the trap, the nation was on the alert and frustrated his efforts. No sooner did they learn that their king was arrested and imprisoned than they flew to arms, placed their country in a position of defence, and armed themselves ready to resist all aggression. Caracalla hesitated and, about three years later (A.D. 215), he sent Theocritus, one of his favourites, to effect their subjugation; but not only did they defeat him in arms, and inflicted a severe defeat on the military management general. It was perhaps this disaster which suggested to Caracalla a change in his method of proceeding. Professing to put away from him all the sights of war and conquest, he pretended to spend the remainder of his days in the pursuits of the Muses, and the establishment of a reign of universal happiness and tranquillity. Having transferred his residence from Nicomedia to Antioch, the ancient capital of the Roman Orient, he there began to amuse himself with pursuits of unusual magnificence for the Pretorian prefect. Artificers who were to make him a present of a novel and unheard-of character. The Roman emperor said that he wished his collection could not only exhibit the usual objects of art, but also the portraits of all men, to a great degree

No one could be a suitable wife for him who was not a princess. He therefore asked the Parthian monarch for the hand of his daughter. Rome and Parthia divided between them the sovereignty of the world, united as they would be by this marriage no longer requiring any boundary as separating them; they would constitute a power which could not but be irresistible. It would be easy for them to reduce under their sway all the barbarous races on the skirts of the two empires, and to hold them in subjection by a flexible system of administration and government. The Roman military was the best in the world, and its strength lay in hand fighting; it could be assailed to no advantage. The Parthians surpassed all nations in the number of their cavalry and the excellence of their archers. If these advantages, instead of being separated, were combined, and the various elements on which success in war depended were thus brought into harmonious union, there could be no difficulty in establishing and maintaining a universal monarchy. With that done, the Parthian spices and rare stuffs, as also the Roman metals and manufactures, would no longer need to be imported across and in small quantities by merchants; but as the two countries would form together but one nation and one state, there would be a free interchange among the citizens of their various products and commodities. To the Parthian king and his advisers the proposition was as unwelcome as it was strange. The whole project appeared to them monstrous. Artabanus himself misdoubted the Emperor's sincerity, and did not believe that he would persevere in it. But it

threw him into a state of extreme perplexity. Bluntly to reject the overture was to offend the master of thirty two legions, and to provoke a war the results of which might be ruinous. To accept it was to depart from all Parthian traditions, and to plunge into the unknown and the unconjecturable. Artabanus therefore temporised. Without giving a positive refusal he stated certain objections to the proposal, which made it, he thought, inexpedient, and begged to be excused from complying with it. "Such a union as was suggested could scarcely," he said, "prove a happy one. The wife and husband differing in language, habits, and modes of thought, could not but become estranged one from another. There was no want of patrician at Rome, possessing daughters with whom the Emperor might wed as suitably as the Parthian kings did with the females of their own royal house. It was not fit that either family should sully its blood by mixture with a foreign stock."

Upon this answer reaching him, Caracallus, according to the Court historian, Dio Cassius, immediately declared war, and invaded the Parthian territory with a large army. Herodian, however, who seems likely to be more trustworthy, gives a different account. Caracallus, he declares, instead of quarrelling with Artabanus for his qualified refusal, followed up his first embassy with a second, has envoys brought rich gifts to Ctesiphon, and assured the Parthian monarch that the Emperor was serious in his proposals, and had the most friendly intentions possible. Here upon Artabanus, well satisfied with the assurances

given him, or else afraid to give offence, he addressed Caracalla as his future son-in-law, and invited him to come with all speed and fetch home his bride. 'And then,' continues the historian, 'when this was noised abroad the Parthians made ready to give the Roman Emperor a fit reception, being transported with joy at the prospect of an eternal peace. Caracalla thereupon crossed the rivers without hindrance and entered Parthia, just as if it were his own land. Everywhere along his route the people greeted him with salutes and dressing their altars with garlands, offered upon them all manner of spices and incense, whereat he made pretence of being vastly pleased. As his journey now approached its close and he drew near to the Parthian Court Artabanus, instead of awaiting his arrival went out and met him in the spacious plain before the city, with intent to entertain his son-in-law, his daughter's bridegroom and his own son-in-law. Meanwhile, the whole multitude of the barbarians, crowned with freshly gathered flowers, and clad in garments embroidered with gold and variously dyed, were keeping holiday and dancing gracefully to the sound of the flute, the pipe and the drum—an amusement wherein they take great delight after they have indulged freely in wine. Now when all the people had come together, they dismounted from their horses, hung up their quivers and their bows, and gave themselves up to libations and revels. The concourse of barbarians was very great and they stood arranged in no sort of order; since they did not apprehend any danger, but were all endeavouring to catch a sight of the bridegroom

Suddenly the Emperor gave his men the signal to fall on and massacre the barbarians. These amazed at the attack, and fearing themselves struck and wounded forthwith took to flight. Artabanus was hurried away by his guards, and betook on a horse, whereby he escaped with a few followers. The rest of the barbarians were cut to pieces, some that could not reach their horses, which, when they discovered, they had allowed to graze freely over the plain; nor were they able to make use of their legs, since these were entangled in the long flowing garments which descended to their heels. Many, too, had come without quivers or bows which were not wanted at a wedding. Caracalla when he had made a vast slaughter and taken a multitude of prisoners and rich booty, moved off without meeting with any resistance. In his retreat he allowed his soldiers to burn all the cities and villages, and to carry away as plunder whatever they chose.

The advance of Caracalla had been through Babylonia, probably along the course of the Euphrates; his return was through Adiabene and Mesopotamia. In Adiabene he was further enriched and offended the Parthians by violating the sanctity of the royal burial-place at Arbela where, as a rule, the Parthian kings were interred. Arbela had been regarded from of old as a city of the Dead, and the Arsacidæ had made it their ordinary place of sepulture. Caracalla caused the tombs to be opened, the bones dragged forth from them, and the remains dispersed to the four winds. No insult could be greater than this, and the act scars rather

that of a madman than of a mere ordinary tyrant. We are reminded of Aristotle's observation, that "tyrannies of brilliant talents go off after a time into dispositions bordering upon madness," and see that that of the Antonines was no exception. Caracalla can scarcely have been in his senses to have committed an action from which no possible good could arise, and for which, as he might have anticipated, a severe reckoning was attowards to be exacted.

Meanwhile, however, he was pursuing his gay career in what a time and in what chastened. He wrote to the Senate in the gravest possible tone to declare, without giving any details, that the whole East was subject to him and that there was not a kingdom in those parts but had submitted to his authority. The Senate, though not imposed upon, wrote back in flattering terms and granted him all the honours that would have been suitable to a veritable conqueror. For his own part, he remained in Mesopotamia, passing the winter there, and amusing himself with hunting and chariot-driving. There were still lions in the Mesopotamian region, as in Assyrian times, and the young Antonine, though a poor soldier, seems to have been a bold hunter. He had apparently persuaded himself that no external danger threatened Rome, and was content to idle away his time in the grassy Mesopotamian plains which now—in early spring—must have been in earthly paradise. April was reached, and it was high time for an active commander to have commenced the marshalling and exercising of his troops, or even the initiatory movements of the dreaded campaign, but Caracalla con-

turned [illegible], occupied in his amusements, his suspicions of his officers, and his contributions of [illegible] money, and cared little as to what fate was in store for them. He was on his way to visit an oracle in the Temple of the Moon-God, near Carrhæ, when one of his [illegible] having ceased out, a company was formed against him in the camp, and he was murdered by Julius Martialis, one of his guards on

April 8, A.D. 217.

In the place of [illegible], a new emperor had to be appointed. The choice of the army fell upon Macrinus, one of the Praetorian Prefects, the chief mover in the present conspiracy. His elevation almost exactly coincided with the accession of Artaxerxes, who had, [illegible] during the course of the winter months, and brought into exact and orderly [illegible] now constituted into Roman Mesopotamia, and was anxious to engage the Romans in a pitched battle in order to exact a heavy retribution for the treacherous massacre at Ctesiphon and the wanton ravages of Media. But Macrinus was scarcely prepared to meet him. Though Lieutenant Prefect, he had never had the instincts of a soldier, but was far more versed in civil affairs, and adapted to head office in the civil administration or in the palace. Accordingly, no sooner did he find himself confronted by the Parthian monarch than he hastily sent an embassy to his camp with an offer to surrender all the prisoners carried off in the late campaign as the price of peace. But Artaxerxes had higher aims. "The Roman Emperor," he said, in reply, "must not only restore the prisoners unjustly captured in a time

of peace but must also consent to relinquish all the towns and castles which Carrhæ had fallen to Rome must make compensation for the wanton injury done to the tombs of the kings, and must further cede Mesopotamia to the Parthians, and retire beyond the line of the Euphrates.' It was morally impossible that Roman Emperor should consent to such demands as these without first trying the fortune of war and accordingly Macrinus felt himself compelled much against his will to fight a battle. He had with him a large army which of late had been flushed with victory, had at any rate not known defeat and it had, besides, the prestige of the Roman name always a source of confidence to those who bore it, and of terror to their adversaries.

Artabanus, on his part, had done his best to make his army formidable. He had collected it from all quarters, had made it strong in cavalry and archers, and had attached to it a novel force of considerable importance consisting of a corps of picked soldiers clad in complete armour and carrying spears or lances of unusual length who were mounted on camels. The Romans had besides the enemy legionaries in which their strength mainly consisted a large number of light armed troops, and a powerful body of Mauretanian cavalry. The battle, which lasted three days, and was fought near Nisibis in Upper Mesopotamia, began at daybreak on the first day by a rapid advance of the Parthians who after sounding their kettle-drum, mounted with loud cries to the combat and, under cover of a shoal of arrows delivered charge after charge. The Romans, receiving their

[illegible] armour [illegible] the ranks of the legionaries, [illegible] from but scattered [illegible] from the bows of the horse-archers and from the [illegible] of the camp [illegible] and [illegible], whenever they [illegible] the enemy and [illegible] close, but they [illegible] the [illegible] the [illegible] from the enemy and [illegible] them [illegible]. As they [illegible] they [illegible] with [illegible] or [illegible] and [illegible] for [illegible] the feet of [illegible], and this stratagem was so far successful that the [illegible] soon found themselves in difficulties, and the two armies respectively returned without any decisive result, to their camps.

On the following day there was again a combat which seemed likely to [illegible] during the night, and to have been equally indecisive with the preceding one. But of this, which is wholly unrecorded by Dio, we do not possess any [illegible]. The third day arrived and the fight was once more renewed, but [illegible] the Parthians had recourse to new tactics. Perceiving that they were [illegible] to beat and disperse their enemy [illegible] they [illegible] their efforts towards surrounding them [illegible] the entire force. The troops, who were far more numerous than those of the Romans, spread themselves out right and left, threatening to turn the Roman flanks and envelop the whole army. Macrinus to meet these tactics and battle [illegible] was forced more and more to extend his own line, and consequently to attenuate it unduly, so that at last it broke up. Confusion began to be greatly increased by the

cowardice of the Roman Emperor, who was among the first to take to flight, and hurry back to his camp. As a matter of course he unwisely set the example, and his army, a rough-and-ready band, suffered very severe losses. The defeat, however, was decisive, and was felt even by the Romans themselves, and in the negotiations which followed the humble Macrinus had to accept terms of peace, which, though less disgraceful than those at first proposed, must be regarded as quite humiliating. The surrender of Mesopotamia was not much to signify, but besides restoring the captives and the booty carried off by Caracalla in his raid Macrinus had to pay as compensation for the damages inflicted no less a sum than a million and a half of our money. The transactions of Rome with Parthia were thus brought to an end after nearly three centuries of struggle by the ignominious purchase of a peace. Macrinus returned within his own frontier in the summer of A.D. 217, and before Rome was again called upon to make war in these parts the sovereignty of the Parthians had terminated.

XXII.

[illegible] OF THE PARTHIANS—DOWNFALL OF THE PARTHIAN EMPIRE.

The tendency of the Parthian Empire to disintegration has been frequently noted in these pages. From the first there was a want of attachment among its parts and a looseness of organization which bore for the present with stress of the body politic. It was naturally only that the races composing it were so various, the character and constitutions of the provinces so unlike, the means of intercommunication so defective, the entire system by which it was sought to give completeness and unity to the *despotic monarchy* was so ineffective in vigour and efficacy, that a long maintenance of cohesion was almost impossible. Kingdoms—Empires, as they have been called—are always unstable, and unless the dominant power possesses a very marked superiority they are sure sooner or later to break up. In the wide-spread empire built up by the Arsacidæ the Parthians could not possibly claim any very decided superiority over the other principal component parts, either in physical or in mental characteristics. They were not braver than the Medes, the Hyrcanians, the Armenians, or the

Persians they were not more intelligent than the Babylonians, the Bactrians, or the Assyrians. That they had some qualities which brought them to the front, cannot, of course, be denied, but these were not such as to strike the minds of men very strongly or to obtain universal and unqualified recognition. Their rule was acquiesced in as strong, rather because the Oriental approximates the advantages of settled and quiet government than because the subject races regarded them as having any peculiar claim to govern. Each of the principal nations probably thought itself quite as fit to hold the first place in the commonwealth as the Parthians, and under favourable circumstances each secondary monarch was quite ready to assert and maintain his independence.

Revolts of distant kingdoms or tribes were thus of frequent occurrence during the entire period of the Parthian monarchy. But, as time went on, they became more frequent, more determined, and more difficult to subdue. It has been already related how, as early as the time of Volagases I, Hyrcania broke off from the empire, and was probably not recovered subsequently.[1] But this was also from time to time a sort of separate appanage, conceded to a prince of the Royal House who accepted it in satisfaction of his claims to the chief authority. Armenia was still more closely attached to the empire, being more often and for longer periods reckoned an independent state than a subject one. At one time Iberia was found almost as persistent under Hyrcania.[2] The single tie of a nominal subjection to a distant

[1] Supra, p. 296.

[2] Page 119.

suzerain proved a weak bond when any strain was put upon it, and there was constant danger of this or that province detaching itself from the great mass of the empire and entering upon a separate existence.

We are thus entitled to say that there was something like a general discontent of the provinces with their condition under the central government, at any rate for the last century and a half of Parthian rule. It is difficult to recover to analyse the grounds of this discontent, or to decide what elements in it had the greatest weight, and what were of minor importance. Any such rule must always be more or less irksome to those who have to submit to it, and must more or less chafe and gall them as they exceed or fall short in justice and sensibility. The fact would be increased or diminished by the character of the rule: its conformance with justice, its regard for promises and engagements, its care for its subjects, its clemency, its power and will to protect, its moral firmness and purity. It cannot be said that the Parthians fell flagrantly short in any of these particulars or deserve to be regarded as either on the one hand weak and careless or on the other hand tyrannical and oppressive. They no doubt took the heavy share of plunder, and property, but beyond this advantage which is often taken by all dominant peoples, it does not appear that their subjects had any special grievances of which to complain. The Parthians were tolerant; they did not interfere with the religious practices of their subjects, or attempt to enforce uniformity of creed or worship. Their military system did not press over heavily on the subject races, nor is there any reason

to believe that the scale of their taxation was excessive. Such tyranny as is charged upon certain Parthian monarchs is not of a kind that would have been sensibly felt by the conquered nations, since it was exercised on none who were not Parthians. If at any time the rulers of their vassal states failed to perform the great duties of civil government, it was rather in the way of laxity than that they erred by excess of tension, rather by loosening the bonds of authority than by over-tightening them.

Some time must be found for the general discontent, beyond the "normal dissatisfaction" of a dominant race which is so usual, may perhaps be made out by careful consideration, in two respects and in two only. In the first place, there were times when the Parthian government very imperfectly accomplished its great duty of preserving internal order and tranquillity. The history of Anna and Artaban which has been dwelt upon at some length in a former chapter[1] brings out very strongly this defect in the Parthian governmental system and reveals a condition of things which, if it had been permanent, must have been intolerable. We can only suppose that the anarchical times of which we have so melancholy a picture were occasional and exceptional, the result of internal disorders which ere long came to a head, and then passed away — or we should have to imagine a government, which failed none of the functions of a government, lasting for centuries, and some of the most spirited nations on the earth submitting to it and seeking no better.

[1] Chap. XIV. pp. 246-256.

The [illegible] favour of the Parthians [illegible] the later [illegible] of their history. It [illegible] from the general [illegible] of the vigour of the nation which [illegible] had [illegible] that [illegible] previously, [illegible] adequate protection to the [illegible] states [illegible] especially protection against the [illegible] power, [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] into Asia, and which [illegible] to [illegible] the interests of [illegible] under [illegible] The [illegible] of Parthia [illegible] was accepted by the [illegible] [illegible] powers as [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] their number which was most competent to make head against European invasion, and to secure the native races in continued independence of an influence which they recognised as at once despotic and altogether hateful. It may well have appeared at this time to the various vassal states that the Parthian empire had become effete, that the qualities which had advanced the race to the leadership of Western Asia were [illegible], and that unless some new power could be raised up to act energetically against Rome, the West would obtain complete dominion over the East, and Asia be absorbed into Europe. Where there was so little as to which nation it might be most necessary to be the first to take the lead, if Parthia had to be deposed, and the instinct of self-aggrandisement would lead the core empire to overstep at the present its own proper limits, it might even to take measures to push their claims. Probably for some considerable time before the movement headed by Artaxerxes [illegible] of Babek commenced such thoughts had been familiar to the wiser men among many of the Vassal [illegible] and a [illegible] preparation for this

[illegible] for the revolution which seemed to break out so suddenly at last.

If again, we ask what peculiar grounds of grievance had the Persians than the other nations or why did the burden of tyranny, the standard of revolt fall [illegible] upon them, we have a further difficulty in obtaining an answer. There is no appearance of the Persians having been in any way singled out by the Lord as a nation or having had any more [illegible] than the rest of the subject nations. The complaints which are made are negative rather than positive, and amount to little more than the following — That high officers of state, civil or military, were for the most part confined to the Persians and to a few of the most favoured nations; That the doors of the royal palace were not thrown open in any fair proportion to the Persians; That the priests of the Persian religion were not held in sufficient honour, as they were accustomed to in the later days of the Empire; and That no advantage in any respect was allowed to the Persians over the rest of the conquered peoples, notwithstanding that they had for so many years exercised supremacy over Western Asia, and even to the last of Asiatic wealthies such names as those of Cyrus and Darius Hystaspis. It was thus not because they were worse treated than their brother subjects that the Persians were discontented, but because their pretensions were higher. They thought the measure of service and of reward unequal and unjust, but they murmured. In fact the Persians had at no time ever forgotten that they had once been lords of Asia, and it appears from that the Empire seemed to have

forgotten it. They had at no times submitted to Parthian hegemony as it were under protest; now they were no longer required to submit to it. They believed, and probably with justice, that under the changed circumstances of the time they were better suited than the Parthians to direct the affairs of Western Asia, and they resolved at any rate to make the attempt. Their motives are to be found in their success. As the Parthians had no right to their position but such as arose out of the law of the strongest, so when the time came that they had lost this pre-eminence in strength, having passed to a nation hitherto counted among their subjects, it was natural and right that the seat of authority should shift with the shift in the balance of power, and that the ascendancy of the Persians should be once more recognised.

In one respect the Parthian rule must always have grated upon the feelings of their Persian subjects more than upon those of the Semitic races. There was in the Parthians an ingrained coarseness and savagery which could not but be especially distasteful to a people of such comparative refinement as the Persians. Persian art, Persian manners, Persian literature had a delicacy and a polish which the rude Parthians, with their Tatar breeding, could not appreciate, and the countrymen of Cyrus and Darius of Firdausi and Hafiz must have had an instinctive aversion from the semi-barbarous race whose manners were still deeply tinged with Scythicism.

It may also be suspected, though of this there is less evidence, that the religion which transformed the

[illegible] of Western Asia from the Parthians to the Persians from the Arsacidæ to the Sassanidæ was to some extent a [illegible]. The "Book-Religion" of Zoroaster with its [illegible], its complicated spirit [illegible] and its [illegible] mind was unsuited for the [illegible] through which Western Asia had to pass between the [illegible] of Alexander and the formation of the New Persian state, and appears to have been superseded, except in Persia proper by a ruder system, of which the principal elements were derived from the Scythian and Mongolian [illegible] of nomadic life; but the time was not again come when more enlightened ideas were to the ascendant. The various forms of Gnosticism show how much [illegible] more assertion dwelt among the Western Asiatics in the first and second centuries of our era; and how speculations were rife which [illegible] all the deepest problems of spiritual religion. The [illegible] which revived in Manichæism and the Persian [illegible] after [illegible] may have been partly caused by a [illegible] push that [illegible] the front and to take advantage of the [illegible] in which dualistic tenets were beginning to be received. It is certain that among the [illegible] causes which [illegible] the success of the Persians was a [illegible] in Western Asia—the substitution of Parthian for [illegible] all [illegible] [illegible] and [illegible] the actual revival of the Magian power and the [illegible] of [illegible] such as [illegible] to the [illegible] Zoroaster.

The [illegible] of Shapur [illegible] seems to have separated the [illegible] peace with Rome

from the outbreak of rebellion under Artaxerxes. During this time the question of sovereignty between Artabanus V and Vologeses V continued without interruption, and the power of Parthia was still further weakened by Artaxerxes' organization of great fiefs with branches of the royal family which were settled in Parthia. Nor did internal disunity reveal itself in various ways only. The tributary king of Persis, young, active, and energetic, became daily more conscious of his ability, if not to recover the empire of Cyrus, at any rate to shake off the rule which had galled and still threatened for so many centuries. Independence was probably all that he originally looked for; but in course of time, as the struggle went on, and he saw with respect to the possibilities of the situation opened themselves before him, and the contest became one for life or death between the two kingdoms. After establishing his authority in Persis Proper he turned his arms eastward against Carmania Kermân, and in a short space of time easily reduced that spacious peopled and not very mountainous country. The next task in hand was a more arduous enterprise. The wealthy and fertile country of Media Atropatene lay to the north. Artaxerxes proceeded to make war upon its ruler, and to annex to his own portions of the Median territory. But this was to attack the Parthian kingdom at its heart since Media, Assyria Adiabene, and Babylonia formed the main strength and the central mass of the Empire. Artabanus, who had thought but lightly of a Persian revolt, and had probably regarded incursions into Carmania with supreme indifference, as concern

ing his brother rather than himself, was now effectually [illegible]. Collecting his forces he took the field in person against Persia Proper, and engaged in a desperate struggle with his rival. Three great battles are said to have been fought between the contending powers. In the last, which took place according to the Persian authorities in the plain of Hormuz between Behbehan and Shuster on the course of the Jerahi river, Artabanus was, after a desperate conflict, completely defeated by his antagonist (A.D. 226), and lost his life in the battle.

The struggle, however, was not yet over. Arta-

COIN OF ARTAXERXES.

xerxes, the eldest son of Artabanus, claimed the crown, and was supported by a large number of adherents. His uncle Chosroes, who had received the throne of Armenia from Artabanus, espoused his cause, gave the Parthian refugees an asylum in his kingdom, and even fought a battle with Artaxerxes in their defence. In this he was so far victorious that the Persian found it necessary to retreat and retire to his own dominions in order to augment his forces. But the struggle was too unequal for him to continue. Within a very few years, it is commonly asserted, the entire East was everywhere under the arms of Artaxerxes prevailed, and the Parthian Empire was overthrown. All the provinces

submitted the last Arsacid prince fell into the hands of the Persian king, and the founder of the new dynasty sought to give legitimacy to his rule by taking to wife an Arsacid princess.

The duration of the Parthian monarchy was a little short of five centuries. It commenced about B.C. 255, and it terminated in A.D. 227. It was the rule of a race of Scythic or Tatar or Turkic extraction over a mixed population, chiefly of Semitic or Aryan race, and for the most part more advanced in civilisation than their rulers. Though its organisation was loose, it was not ill adapted for Orientals who prefer a lax system to one where everything is cut and dry, and are opposed to a rule that is strict and unalterable. Western Asia must be considered to have enjoyed a time of comparative rest under the Parthian sovereignty, and to have been as prosperous as at almost any former period of its history. The savage hordes of Northern Asia and Europe were, in the main, kept out, and though the arms of Rome from time to time ravaged the more western provinces, and even occasionally penetrated to the capital, yet this state of things was exceptional, for the most part European aggression was arrested or quickly repulsed. Very few conquests were made, and when they were made, they were not always retained, and on the last two monarchs of the Parthian dominion returned almost the same as they had been under the first Mithridates. Still, there was no doubt a gradual internal decay which worked itself out essentially in two directions. The Arsacid race, with which the fate of the empire was closely bound up, instead of cohering together in

that of a "union" which, as soon as the strength allowed itself to be tested by disunion, proved to be not a force in parts, but to be made a force of by every foreign invader or domestic rival who chose to use its name in order to cloak his own selfish projects. The race itself does not seem to have become exhausted. Its chiefs, the successive occupants of the throne, never sank into mere weaklings or *fainéants*, never shut themselves up in the seraglio or ceased to take an active and energetic part in civil broils and struggles with foreign powers. Artabanus, the adversary of Artaxerxes, was as brave and capable a monarch as had ever sat upon the Parthian throne in previous ages. But the fusion with the race half of the population, native and foreign, was sufficiently seasoned by the leaven which existed without it, by the profession with which the sacred creed was held by those of whose veins it ran, and the obligation of knowing what by a member of it was to true head and so entitled to the allegiance of all those who wished to be faithful Parthian subjects. Further the vigour of the Parthian society must have gradually decayed, and their supremacy over the races of the nations under their dominion must have lessened. Marked evidence was given of this when, about A.D. 75, Hyrcania became independent. It is possible that there may have been other cases of successful rebellions in the remoter eastern regions of the races, when they are suddenly lifted to power almost always decline in strength, and sometimes with extreme rapidity. The Parthians cannot be said to have experienced a rapid deterioration, but they too

se the dominant race of Western Asia both before and after that, for a considerable time the governing influence was Persian, and it was to their place that those who succeeded in power and in many habits

XXIII.

PARTHIAN ART, RELIGION, AND CUSTOMS.

"THE Parthians," according to one writer of high repute, "have left no material traces of their existence." When the Achæmenian Persians were struck down by Alexander, the old art "disappeared from the Mesopotamian world." It would be strange indeed if so broad a statement could be true unless, when made of any tribe or of any distinguished people. Roughly and loosely, no doubt, it embodies a certain curious and important fact—the fact, namely, that the Parthians were in no full or permanent sense of the terms either builders or possessors in any of the fine arts. But it is an over statement, a very considerable exaggeration. The portion of her buildings and ornaments that should, alone have been sufficient to save them from the undeserved reproach, since numismatists have long had under their notice many beautiful types of coins issued from Parthian mints during the five centuries of their sovereignty and have assigned to several of them a fair amount of merit. Certain examples show, as might have been expected, that in other branches

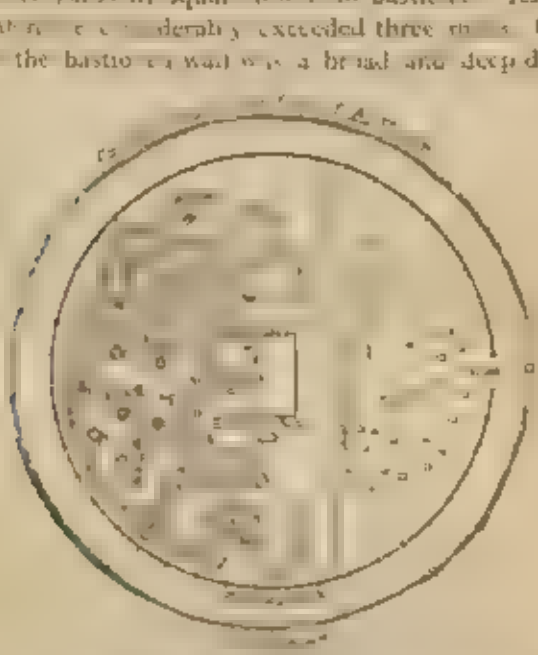
of art also, and especially in architecture. Partial traces, efforts and produced results not wholly despicable.

The remains at Hatra or El Hadhr, are the most important which can reasonably be assigned to the Parthian period. Hatra first comes into notice in the early part of the first century before Christ, and is then a place of no small importance. It successfully resists Trajan in A.D. 116, and Severus in A.D. 198. It is then described as a large and populous city, defended by strong and extensive walls, and containing within a famous Temple of the Sun celebrated for the great value of its accumulated offerings. The people are Arabs, and Lords of the Arabian Stock, and they have their own kings, who are tributary monarchs under Parthia. By the year A.D. 363, Hatra has gone to ruins, and it is then described as "long since deserted." It was no part at all in Sassanian history, and nearly has for its most flourishing period the first century, or century and a quarter, of the Parthian rule (from A.D. 100 to A.D. 225).

The ruins of El Hadhr have been carefully described by two English travellers, Mr. Ross and Mr. Ainsworth, whose accounts will be found in the ninth and seventh volumes of the Geographical Society's Journal.[1] They have also attracted the attention of a professional critic, Mr. James Fergusson, who has given a short account of them which it would be well to read in his "History of Architecture." I shall however refer to especially on the two former—the only original—authorities.

[1] Ammianus Marcellinus, xxv. 8.

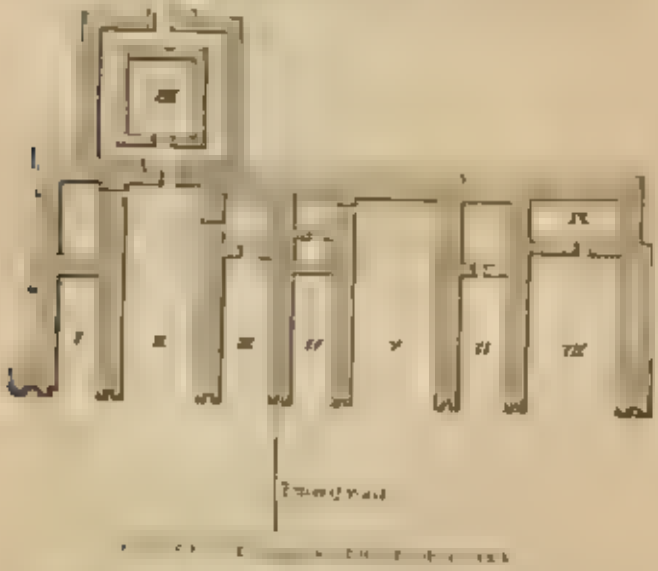
[illegible] was circular in shape and nearly [illegible] inclosed by a wall, ten feet [illegible] built of large square-cut stones, and strengthened at intervals of about a hundred and [illegible] yards by square towers or bastions. Its circumference considerably exceeded three miles. Outside the bastioned wall was a broad and deep ditch,



[illegible] on the farther side of the ditch an earthen rampart of [illegible] and thickness. The [illegible] by four entrances, of which the principal [illegible] These entrances [illegible] and consisted of two walls, one of them being towards the west and the other towards the north.

than architecture

at Luxor, was an edifice three hundred and sixty feet long by two hundred and ten feet broad in its greatest part. It consisted of a series of seven oblong vaulted halls, placed one by one behind each other, with a certain number of small separate rooms, and one large building at the back. The halls were of various breadths. The smaller ones,



of which there were four, Nos. I. III. IV. and VI. in the plan, measured about sixty feet long by twenty-six feet broad, and had a height of about forty feet. The larger ones, Nos. II. and V. on the plan, measured about [illegible] feet in length, by [illegible] feet broad, and had a height of about sixty feet. One, No. VII. on the plan, [illegible] of forty

five feet a length of not much above seventy feet was reached. The object of the bore was to find water, and the water was almost reached at the depth of seventy-two feet. The bore was lined by semi-circular tunnel walls without ribs or other ornaments, and they were of ordinary open brick work, the bricks being laid flat on the curved surface. The outward parts of the walls were about three feet thick, and were composed of solid brick work, but their portion next to the bore was composed of open brick work. The bore was therefore lighted by the sun's rays, except from these narrow passages, and must have been almost absolutely dark.

The arrangements attached to the mouth of the bore-hole by which the water was to be drawn were these. There was an opening into it. This opening consisted of a square chamber, open at the top, and measuring about four feet each way. It was covered over with a wooden platform, through which a square hole was cut, and round this hole was built a low wall. The chamber was entered by a doorway on the south side of the bore-hole. The chamber was open to the sky, and the water could easily be poured from the mouth of the bore-hole into the chamber. Hadda No. 11 was a circular [illegible] Above it was [illegible] and on the [illegible] of the bore-hole [illegible] and [illegible] of the [illegible] to the [illegible]

lozenges. Finally, on the pilasters, immediately below the cornice were sculptured either two or three human heads, the length of each head being about two feet and the faces representing various types of humanity, some old and some young, some

HEAD OF A MAGIAN WITH TURBAN AND CAPTAL.

male and some female, some apparently portraits, some idealised and many of them grotesque in their accompaniments. The drawing of the heads is said to be full of spirit and their general effect lifelike and striking.

No. VII had a peculiar ornamentation. In lieu of

pilasters and cornices, the two side walls appear to have been decorated with two rows of eight human-headed bulls standing out from the wall as far as their shoulders at a distance from the ground of about ten feet. Similar figures of bulls are found occasionally in Phœnicia, but otherwise the ornamentation is very unusual.

It is believed by Mr Fergusson and others, that

RESTORED RE-TOKATION OF THE HATRA BUILDING

the entire edifice, or at any rate the greater portion of it, had originally an upper story. At present the ruins nowhere attain a height much exceeding sixty feet, but it is thought that this height was, originally, at least doubled either a single story or two stories, containing apartments, being superimposed upon the existing range of vaulted halls. One explorer[1] thought that he found some remains of the staircase, which conducted to these upper apartments at the southern extremity of the building. If we accept

[1] Mr. Ross.

centre. Immediately over this was a line of emblematic figures—griffins, eagles, human and animal heads, and the like—as will be best understood by the accompanying representation, which is taken from a drawing by Mr Ross Cranmer, the whole was a cornice projecting slightly, and covered with a sort of arabesque or scroll-work. Among the emblematic heads is one, which so manifestly represents the Sun God that the building has been generally recognised as a temple to that deity. Mr Fergusson however thinks that it "more

FRIEZE IN THE PALACE-TEMPLE OF HATRA.

probably contained a stair or inclined plane leading to the roof or upper rooms which almost certainly existed over the main or basement floor."

The chief ornamentation however, of the Hatra Palace-Temple was on its eastern façade, which was evidently its main front. Here the entire concentric arches of the recess, and all that was left of the wall, were covered with ornament, and this was heightened in several ways by artistic additions. In the first place, the arches

spray, from pillars, or rather pilasters, having bases and capitals of some elegance the number of such pilasters along the entire front amounting to sixteen. Secondly, the stones composing the archivolts of the arches bore a human head, or mask, under a cornice of ovals and acanthus leaves, which gave a very peculiar character to the edifice, and has no exact parallel elsewhere. "The only thing known at all similar," says Mr Fergusson, "is the celebrated arch at Volterra with three masks, but here these are infinitely more numerous over all the arches, and form in fact the principal features of the decorations." Further, in the spaces between the pilasters were in some cases, sculptures representing symbolical figures, as griffins, and the like.

Internally, the halls had, for the most part, no ornamentation. The four smaller ones were absolutely devoid of it, while even the larger ones had only a scanty amount. The longer sides of the halls II and V were broken by three squared pilasters, rising to the commencement of the vaulting, and terminated by a quasi-capital of ornamental work, consisting of a series of alternate ovals and lozenges, each oval containing in its centre a ball of dark stone. Underneath these quasi-capitals at the distance of between two and three feet ran a cornice, which crossed the pilasters and extended the whole length of the apartment, sometimes ornamented with flowers and half ovals, sometimes with alternate ovals and

[1] Fergusson, "History of Architecture," vol. II. 425.

the view of this traveller we may suppose with another explorer that the entire eastern side of the edifice presented some such appearance as shown at page 381, and conclude that the type of architecture, which is entirely different from any previously known in the country, either under the Assyrians, the Babylonians, or the Achæmenian Persians, was an invention of the Parthian period though whether struck out by the Parthians themselves or by some of the nations subjected to their sway may be doubted. The type appears to be the germ out of which the Sassanian architecture was known for its magnificence, grew up, and may be said to have held possession of Mesopotamia and the eastern countries from about A.D. 150 to A.D. 650, when it was superseded by the architecture of the Arabs.

The general style of the buildings at Hatra has been said to be that "Roman or Byzantine," and the details are declared to be "in many cases almost literal imitations of Roman models."[1] This may well be, since Rome was, at the time of their erection, universally recognised as standing at the head of civilization and the arts, so that the builders of other nations naturally went to her for instruction. But the plan of the Hatra buildings is certainly not Roman, and it is avowed that the execution of the ornaments is too rude to admit of the idea that the work was done under the superintendence of a Roman artist.[2] Native talent alone can have been employed, and there is every reason for considering that we may regard the

[1] Mr Ainsworth.

[2] Fergusson, "History of Architecture," vol. ii. pp. 424-5.

work as a fine specimen of what was achieved by the native builders of the Parthian period during the latter time of the empire. The palace of Vologases III. at Ctesiphon, which Avidius Cassius destroyed in his invasion,[1] was probably of the same general character, a combination of forty halls, suitable for ceremonies and audiences with small and dark sleeping or living rooms opening out of them, the whole placed at the middle of a great court with ready access to a chapel or temple where the devotions of the Court might be performed.

It must be added that the halls and rooms of the Hatra edifice are divided into two groups. Halls I, II, and III, with the apartments in their rear, are connected and form one group. Halls IV, V, VI, and VII, form the other. A low fence starting from the wall separating between Halls III and IV, was carried in a straight line eastward across the court in front of the buildings, to the wall separating the court from the outer. Thus there could be no communication between the two groups of apartments except by making a long circuit round almost the entire outline. It is thought that the two groups formed, respectively, the male and the female apartments.

Some architectural fragments discovered by Mr Loftus at Warka, the ancient Erech, in combination with a large number of Parthian coins, and therefore possessing a claim to be regarded as Parthian, seem to deserve mention in this place. They consisted of fragments of cornices, capitals, bases of columns,

[1] See above, p. 336.

friezes, fragments of [illegible] work, with complicated geometric designs of different patterns on the opposite sides, large flakes of painted plaster, and the like. Most of the capitals resembled those of the Greek Ionic order, but presented peculiarities in the proportions of the volutes and other members. Some, however, were of an altogether peculiar type. One in particular, which though square at the summit, must have crowned a round column, is especially remarkable. A large and elegant leaf rises from the necking, and bends under each corner of the abacus. Springing

ARCHITECTURAL FRAGMENTS AT WARKA.

from beneath a smaller curled leaf in the centre is the bust of a human figure, wearing the same preposterous headdress also found characteristic of the Parthian slipper coffins, and the Parthian coins.[1] Other capitals had crowned square pillars, and were ornamented with ovals, and half ovals, resting on leaves resembling those of the oak; circles containing geometrical tracery, and the like. One large fragment of a cornice bore, among other devices, a sprinted crouching griffin, which reminded the discoverer of the

[1] Loftus, 'Chaldæa and Susiana,' p. 286.

similar fresco [illegible] the Temple there at Hatra. Some of the leaves have a [illegible] colour, alternate with leaves and buttons of [illegible] type.

The building, without which these fragments were discovered, was a rectangular chamber forty feet long by twenty-eight feet wide, the mud walls of which, still standing to the height of four feet, had been covered originally with painted plaster of various hues and latterly whitewash with small [illegible] half [illegible]. The columns had half-spreads and base-plinths. The lower portion of each was smooth, and had been originally coloured with bands of red, green, yellow and black, while the upper portion was fluted in [illegible] parts, painted alternately red and yellow, and the [illegible] was painted white. Underneath the floor of the chamber at the depth of six feet was discovered a "pulpy" coffin of the type so common at Warka, bearing coloured figures of disputed [illegible] generally regarded as Parthian. The building would thus seem to have been a sepulchral chamber over a tomb, such as is found frequently in Persia and Egypt.

The decorative and fine art of the Parthians has also received some considerable illustration from the remains discovered at Warka. These included several statuettes in terra-cotta, a vast number of stamped-tiles, many jars, urns, vases, and lamps in earthenware, some small glass bottles, and various personal ornaments such as armlets, bangles, beads for necklaces and toilets, finger-rings, ear-rings, and se-

* [illegible]

rings. Of the statuettes the most interesting is one representing a Parthian warrior, resplendent in clothing upon his left arm, wearing a coat of mail or pointed tunic reaching to the knees, greaves and a helmet ornamented in front. Others represented females. These had lofty head-dresses, which sometimes rose into two projecting horns recalling the fashion of English ladies in the time of Henry IV. These figures were veiled and carefully draped over the upper part of

PARTHIAN JUGS AND JARS.

the person, but showed the face and had the legs bare from the knee downwards.

The jars, jugs, vases, and lamps in earthenware greatly resembled those of the Assyrian and Babylonian periods, but were on the whole more elegant and artistic. The influence of Greek models is apparent in them. One jug, the central one of the engraving, is of "extremely artistic form," and was placed in a recess, within arm's length of a coffin probably for

[1] See "Chaldæa and Susiana," p. 213.

the refreshment of the deceased. The lamps reproduce well known Greek types.

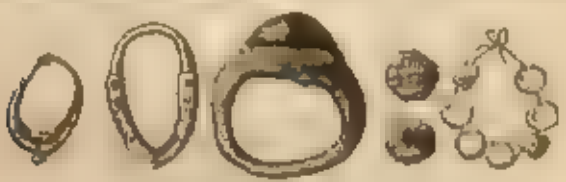
The "whipper-snappers" found at Warka possess a peculiar interest. They are of a very beautiful green glazed ware and vary in length from three feet to six. Great skill in pottery must have been required for their construction. The upper surface presents at one end a large oval aperture, by means of which the body was passed into the interior, the aperture when closed with a plug probably for the reception of wine, which by capillary attraction, and was finally used in despite to a servant or inferior. At the other end is a small circular hole to prevent the bursting of the vessel in the process of baking. From the bottom of the large aperture, and the edges of the upper surface of the coffin, were delicately traced by elevated ridges of small reticulations, each containing a bas-relief figure of a man standing with his arms crossed and hands clasped, with a short sword hanging from his left side and on his head an enormous coiffure of a very curious description.

The personal ornaments were in many cases of tasteful and elegant design. The pointed head dress in thin gold are said to have been worn by men, and pairs of two broad rings of thin gold not unfrequently occurred in the tombs encircling either side of the head. Gold and silver finger-rings abounded and some had stones set in them. Head necklaces were found, together with armlets, bangles, and toe-rings of silver, brass, and copper. Many of the ear-rings were exceedingly elegant, and small

gold plates which seem to have been strung together for necklaces or fillets, were very delicately modelled.

The glass bottles were perhaps lachrymatories. They closely resemble glass-work of the Assyrian and Babylonian periods, and exhibit the same iridescent hues which are the result of slow decomposition. The commonest shape is a rounded belly, surmounted by a short, round neck, having a small handle on either side of it, but flattened so that the smaller diameter of the bottle is less than one-third of the greater one.

In purely æsthetic art—art, that is, into which the idea of the useful does not enter at all—the Parthians



PARTHIAN PERSONAL ORNAMENTS.

appear to have been very deficient. Beyond the statuettes in clay and terra-cotta, which have been already described,[1] no figures in the round can be ascribed to them. Nor are there more than three or four reliefs which have much claim to be pronounced Parthian. One of these is remarkable. At the foot of the great rock of Behistun, which exhibits at the height of many feet above the plain the long inscription and remarkable sculpture of Darius, the son of Hystaspes, is a much-worn sculpture in *alto relievo* which is proved by the inscription accompanying it to belong to

[1] See above, p. 386.

the second reign of Gotarzes (A.D. 46–51), and which was almost certainly set up by that monarch after his defeat of the pretender Meherdates.[1] It seems to have contained a series of tall figures, looking towards the right, and apparently engaged in a march or procession, while above and between them were smaller figures of men on horseback, armed with lances and galloping in the same direction. One of these was attended by a Nike or figure of Victory, floating in the air, and about to place a crown around the rider's brow. The present condition of the sculpture is exceedingly bad. Time and atmospheric influences have almost completely worn away the larger figures, which the latest travellers appear not even to have perceived, and a recent governor of Kermanshah has barbarously inserted into the middle of the relief an arched niche in which he has placed a wholly worthless Arabic inscription. Under these circumstances, there is a difficulty in forming any opinion on the original artistic merit of the work. But the best judges are agreed in pronouncing that even at its best, it must have been a work of inferior quality, falling considerably below the level attained by the Assyrians and even the Achæmenian artists. The resemblance is rather to the productions of the Sassanian or New Persian period. The human figures have, themselves, an ugliness about them which it is painful to contemplate; the horses are rudely outlined, and are too small for the men who ride them; the figure of Victory is out of all proportion to that of the hero whom she crowns, and the diadem which she places upon his head is

[1] *Supra*, p. 289.

and unusually large, being almost as big as herself! On the other hand there is spirit in the attitude both of men and horses, the Victory floats well in mid-air, and the relief is free from the coarse grotesqueness which is so offensive in the greater part of the Sassanian sculptures.

Another relief, belonging probably to a later period, after the Parthians had adopted a Semitic modification of the Greek character, has the Sassanian defects still more accentuated. It represents a king mounted on horseback and receiving a chaplet at the hands of a subject. The king wears a low cap bound round with the diadem, the two long ends of which depend over his shoulder. He is dressed in a closely fitting tunic and loose trousers, and wears also a short cloak fastened under his chin, and reaching nearly to the knee. On his right arm he seems to carry a bracelet, and his feet are encased in boots. The horse which he bestrides is small but strongly made, the tail is long, the ears seem to be cropped and the mane plaited. The whole representation is rude and unlike the forepart of the horse and the Parthian who offers the chaplet being particularly ill drawn. The relief is accompanied by an inscription in the Parthian Semitic character.

A series of reliefs, discovered by the Baron de Bode in the bas-relief-grotto in the year 1841, and very carefully engraved by those best acquainted with the subject as Parthian. In one of these a hunter mounted on horseback, and armed with a bow and arrows and a sword, or short spear is engaged in combat with a bear. The bear raises itself on its

hind legs to a level with the horse's head and appears busy to the attack. The warrior who is clothed simply in a long flowing robe, the Iranian gown and a round hat leans forward on his horse to meet the angry animal, and thrusts his sword or spear with downward stroke into its neck. The horse rears, no arms but teeth ready to the encounter. The execution is somewhat rude but the figures are fairly well drawn, if we except the head of the horse.

Another relief on the same rock shows a female figure reclining on a couch, and guarded by three male attendants, one at the head of the couch unarmed, and two armed with spears at the foot seated, and armed with spears. The woman is unveiled at her head and carries in her right hand which is outstretched a chaplet or wreath. One of the specimen has a coat of mail over a hood dress, the other has a short trouser attached to the head of his spear. Below the main group are three rudely carved standing figures which represent probably their attendants. The third relief of the series is the largest and most elaborate. It shows us a personage of superior pretensions, a Mazda worshipper to what seems to be a religious ceremonial standing with his right arm elevated by the aid of a cross, accompanied with weapons or chaplets, and mounted upon a lion of portentous proportions. Before him, at present, arranged in two rows, are the thirty-and all of them, except the first in each row standing. The first in each row sits upon a rudely designed chair or stool. A religious function is probably represented. We can scarcely fail to recognise in the principal figure, who

wears a conical cap, has his hair puffed out in enormous masses on either side of the head like the kings of the later reliefs, and is altogether richly costumed. A priest of the Parthian religion, probably a great hierarch, engaged in one of the duties of his office. Perhaps we may best regard the set of reliefs as forming a connected series, No. I representing the Parthian monarch occupied in the chase of the bear, No. II the prince conveying his return on her couch to the palace, her attendants, and No. III exhibiting the chief Magus attached to the Court making prayer for the monarch's safety.

Altogether, the Parthians cannot be said to have shown more than a very moderate degree of artistic or aesthetic talent. Their architecture is their best point, and even that falls far below the architecture of the other dominant races of Western Asia, whether before or after them, whether Assyrian, Indo-Aryans, Achæmenian Persian, Sassanian Persians, Mongols, or Arabs. Their glyptic art is even worse, and, considering that they had access, not only to Assyrian and Achæmenian but also in some degree to Greek models, must be regarded as possessing a very low amount of merit. A certain number of their coins are fairly well done, and one or two of their reliefs, though rude and clumsy, have spirit. But speaking generally, we must admit that the vocation of the people was not towards the artistic, and that they were probably well-advised to employ their energies in other directions. The scant remains of their art are an indication that they recognised their own limitations, and, consciously that it was not in their power to excel in the aesthetic

field, preferred to occupy themselves in pursuits for which they were better fitted, as war, hunting, and government.

Not much can be said on the subject of the Parthian religion. It seems probable that, under the Arsacidæ as Persians, they accepted the Zoroastrian system—modified by the practice of the house of Cyrus from Xerxes backwards—but as this was certainly not their own ancestral religion they cannot be supposed to have been at any time very zealous in the observance of the Iranian practices. As age succeeded age they naturally became more lukewarm in their feelings and more lax in their religious observance. The main characteristic of their creed, if we may so call it—for the Zoroastrian belief was Dualistic—was the worship of Two Great Principles of good and evil, called respectively Ormazd and Ahriman. We may not doubt that, with their ancestors, the Parthians were first to have admitted this antagonism and professed a belief in Ormazd as the supreme good, and a dread of Ahriman and his machinations. But, practically, their religion as it exists rested, not on these dim abstractions, but on beings whose existence they could better realize and whose power they could feel to be less remote from themselves. The actual worship of the Parthians was addressed to the Sun and Moon, to deities who were supposed to preside over the several Hours, and to ancestral gods and over family possessed a certain sanctity which gave it a place with every change of habitation. The sun was situated at his rising, as we read, in temples, probably under the Aryan name of Mithra, with

sacrifices and offerings had statues erected in his honour and was usually associated with the lesser luminaries.[1] The deities of the Royal House were probably either gods, monsters of Ormazd like the *Aži Dahâka* [illegible] of the Persians, or else the ancestors of the reigning monarch to whom a semi-divinity seems to have been ascribed in the earliest times of the empire. The Parthian kings usually swore by Mithra or the sun-god, and other members of the royal family made use of the same oath. The chief worship, however, of the great mass of the people, even when they were of the royal stock, was concentrated upon ancestral images, which had a place assigned to them in each house, and received the constant attentions of the household.

In the early times of the empire the Magi were found to have received and kept of the pure old tenets and rites of the Mazdayasnian religion more than were professed by the Parthians. Elemental worship was practised. Fire was held sacred, and there was an extreme reverence for rivers. Dead bodies were not buried, but were exposed to be devoured by birds and beasts of prey, after which the bones were collected and placed in tombs.[2] The Magi formed a large portion of the great national council, which elected and if need were deposed the kings. But its powers of free action were not defined. The Arsacid monarchs of Armenia alone took Sacred Fire and Ormazd, which seem to have been kept continually burning, to the camp; and we can scarcely

[1] [illegible] Hist. of Persia, vol. i. p. 74.
[2] Compare above, Chap. V. p. 78.

suppose but that the Parthian Arsacidæ were equally negligent of foreign respect for the ornament of fire so entirely passed away, that we hear of the later Parthians burning their dead?[1] The Magi fell into disrepute, and if not expelled from their posts in the national council at any rate found themselves opposed and repressed on all sides.[2] The later Parthian religion can have been little more than a worship of the Sun and Moon together with a cult of the *hemphim* or sacred images, which were the most precious possessions of each household.

The manners and customs of the Parthians may be most conveniently considered under the two heads of their customs in war and in peace. As they were essentially a warlike people, the chief interest must attach to their military customs, and to these will therefore be assigned the first place. It appears that even the Parthian monarchs of the former times, they did not regard it as necessary to maintain any standing army. When hostilities threatened, and war seemed likely to break out, they sent messengers to the various provinces with the fact, and commanded from each of them a contingent. A certain rendezvous was named, and to it were required to direct together the contingents by the respective commanders. The troops of the provinces, whether tributary kings or satraps, called out the military strength of their respective districts, saw to their arming and provisioning, and marching each at the head of his contingent, brought a foreign auxiliary force to the assistance of their

[1] Herodian, v. 30. [2] Agathias, ii. 24.

suzerain. But the backbone of the army, the portion on which alone much reliance was placed, consisted of Parthians. Each Parthian noble was bound to call out his slaves and his retainers, to arm and equip them at his own expense, and bring them to the general rendezvous by the time fixed upon. The number of troops brought into the field by each noble varied according to his position and his means; we hear in one instance of their amounting to ten thousand, while in another recorded case the average number with each of them provided did not exceed 125. The strength of the royal body-guard can scarcely be reckoned at more than a thousand men.

The Parthian armies, like most others, consisted mainly of both horse and foot, but in proportions which were not common elsewhere. The foot soldiers were comparatively few in number, and were but very little esteemed. Every effort, on the contrary, was made to increase the number and improve the equipment of the horsemen who bore the brunt of every conflict and from whose exertions alone victory was expected. Sometimes armies consisted of horsemen only or rather of horsemen followed by a baggage train composed of camels and chariots, but this only happened under special circumstances.

The horse was of two kinds, heavy and light. The heavy horsemen (*καταφράκται*) wore coats of mail reaching to the knee, composed of saw-like covered

[1] Diodorus, "Vet. Script.," p. 320. [2] Tacitus, "Ann." xi. 8.

PARTHIAN PORTRAIT

with plates or scales of iron or steel, very bright, and capable of resisting a strong blow. They had their heads protected by burnished helmets of Median shape which dazzled the spectator. A specimen in the British Museum, figured by Professor Rawlinson, will best convey the shape. They do not seem to have ordinarily worn greaves, but had their legs covered in a loose trouser which hung about the ankles and concealed the feet. Sandals and shoes were introduced on festival occasions. Their chief offensive arms were a short spear, with which was of great strength and toughness, and a bow and arrows of unusual dimensions. They also carried in their girdle a short sword or knife *akinakes* which was intended to be used in close combat. Their horses were, like themselves, protected by a kind of scale-armour which was either of steel or of bronze polished like the armour of the men.

The light horse appears to have been armed with the same sort of bows and arrows as the heavy, but carried no spear, and was not encumbered with armour. It was carefully trained to the deft management of the horse and bow, and was unequalled in the rapidity and dexterity of its movements. The archer discharged his arrows with as much precision and force in retreat as in advance, and was almost more formidable when he retired than when he charged his foe. Besides his bow and arrows, the light horseman seems to have carried a sword, and he no doubt wore also the customary knife in his belt, but it was as an archer that he was chiefly formidable.

During the later period of the monarchy the Parthians, who had always carried a certain luggage in the conveyance of stores and baggage, are said to have introduced a camel corps into the army itself, and to have derived considerable advantage from the new arm. The camel could bear more weight of the main implements of the Parthian armour than the horse, and the troops were at once less encumbered in the event of a pursuit and more capable of delivering effective blows upon the enemy. In the horse, however, against the camel, the [illegible] the camel were found to be more than [illegible] and the camel was more easily destroyed than a corresponding corps of cavalry, if it could be compelled or forced to pass over ground on which these obstacles had previously been scattered.

We do not hear of any use of chariots by the Parthians, except for the conveyance of the females who commonly accompanied the nobles on their warlike expeditions. The wives and concubines of the chiefs followed the army in great numbers, and women of a lower grade also—singers, women, and musicians—formed a large portion of the camp-followers. Many of these were taken from Seleucia, Ctesiphon, and other Macedonian settlements. The commissariat and baggage departments are said to have been badly organized,[1] but some thousands of baggage camels always accompanied an army for the conveyance of stores and provisions. Of these a considerable portion were laden with arrows, of which

[1] Dio Cassius, xl. 15.

the supply was in this was rendered practically as shown[1]. The employment of the elephant in war was even more rare in Parthia than that of the chariot. Parthian coins occasionally exhibit the animal[2], so that it was certainly known to the people, but its actual employment in warfare is mentioned on no occasion[3], and then we hear of only a single animal, which is ridden by the monarch. As both the Seleucid princes and the Sassanidæ made large use of the elephant in their campaigns, its entire neglect by the Parthians is somewhat remarkable. Probably the unwieldy creature was rejected by them as too heavy and clumsy to suit the light and rapid movements of their armies, and was therefore almost wholly disused during the period of their supremacy.

The Parthian tactics appear to have been of a simple kind and to have differed but little from those of other nations in the same region which have depended mainly on their cavalry. To surround their foe, to entangle him in a network of light cavalry, to cut off his supplies and his straggling parties, and by degrees to bring him into a position where he might be overwhelmed by missiles, was the aim of all Parthian commanders of any military ability. Their warfare was suited for defence rather than for attack, unless against contemptible enemies. They were particularly skilful in sieges, and showed courage in them as far as possible, but when en-

[1] Lindsay, "History and Customs of the Parthians," pl. viii., No. 11; pl. viii., No. 30; Mionnet, "Description de Médailles," Tab. iii., No. 2.

[2] Tacit., "Ann.," xv. 14.

cumstances made it necessary they did not shrink from undertaking great campaigns overseas. Long wars were very distasteful to them, and if they could not win victory tolerably easily they were apt to retire and allow their foe to escape, or to baffle him by withdrawing their forces to a distant and inaccessible region. After their victory over Crassus and Antony they never succeeded in preventing the steady advance of a Roman force into their territory or in repelling a determined attack upon their principal capital. But they generally had their revenge after a little time. It was easy for the Romans to overrun Mesopotamia, but it was not so easy for them to hold it, and it was scarcely possible for them to retire from it after occupation without incurring disaster. The crowds of Parthian horsemen hanging upon the retreating columns straitened them for provisions, galled them with missiles, and destroyed those who could not keep up with the main body. The towns upon the line of their retreat revolted, and another force, having even a chance of success, as Severus and Trajan did, would probably have annihilated the whole army. Of the six great expeditions of Rome against Parthia none was more successful than that of Avidius Cassius, which was also the most brief. In every other case either the whole of the expedition was completely destroyed, or the glory of the advance was tarnished by suffering and calamity during the retreat. Other enemies they usually repulsed with but little difficulty.

When the Parthians entered into battle it was with much noise and boasting. They made no use of trumpets or horns, but employed in their place the

kettledrum, which resounded from all parts of the field when they made their onset. Their attack was—for the most part—furious. The mailed horsemen charged at speed, and were often driven their whole length through the bodies of two enemies at a time. The light horse and the foot, where any were present, delivered their arrows with precision, and with extraordinary force. But if the assailants were met with a steadfast and firm resistance the first violence of the attack was rarely long sustained. The Parthian warriors very quickly grew weary of an equal contest, and if they could not force their enemy to give way, soon changed their tactics. Pretending panic, beating a hasty retreat, and scattering in their flight, they endeavoured to induce their foe to pursue hurriedly and in disorder, being themselves ready at any moment to turn and take advantage of the least appearance of confusion. If these tactics failed, as they generally did after they came to be known, then the combat was frequently converted into a regular battle, further conflict with the foot or with both horse and foot being carried on.

If the Parthians wished to press with an enemy they discharged their bows and, wheeling, with the right arm outstretched, awaited a counterset. They are accused by the Romans of sometimes using treachery in such encounters, but except in the single instance of Crassus, the charge of bad faith breaks down almost if not quite altogether. On some occasions when the intent to wage war only to a certain point is clear, it is likely enough that they may have sought to bring about a return to the *status quo* by the arrangement of terms

of [illegible] a formal meeting was [illegible], held by appointment between the [illegible] of either side [illegible] neutral ground [illegible] in the Euphrates or on a bridge [illegible] across it. Here the chiefs or envoys of the respective nations met, accompanied by an equal number of guards, after the manner of their [illegible] ceremonial. Letters were [illegible] to the [illegible] language known to both parties, being [illegible] of a preliminary commemoration, after which festivities usually took place, the two chiefs mutually entertaining each other, or accepting entertainment [illegible] of a third party. The terms of peace and alliance were reduced to writing, hands were [illegible] as a sign that faith was pledged, and oaths having [illegible] the ceremonies broke up, and the chiefs with their armies set out on their return to their respective countries.

The [illegible] of the Parthian Court is celebrated in general terms by several writers, but not many particulars have come down to us respecting it. We are told that it was [illegible] to one of the chief cities of the empire to another at different seasons of the year, so that owing to the vast [illegible] of the country the monarch might [illegible] the duty of providing for the subsistence of his vast train upon the road. The [illegible] composed, of course, the most extensive household of an Oriental sovereign, consisting of a [illegible] of eunuchs and a multitude of secondary [illegible] of all kinds. The legitimate wife of the [illegible] was with rare exceptions a native one, and in most cases was a member of the royal race

of the Arsacidæ: but sometimes she was the daughter of a dependant monarch, and he might even be a slave whom the royal favour has elevated from that position. Both wives and concubines remain ordinarily in the closest seclusion, and we have but little mention of them in the Parthian annals. In one instance however at any rate a queen, educated in the manners of the West, has ventured on setting Oriental etiquette at defiance: she boldly descended herself, took the direction of affairs out of the hands of her husband's subservient eunuchs, and governed in conjunction with her son.[1] Her name and image were even placed upon the coins. Generally, however, the Parthian kings were remarkably free from the weakness of subservience to women and managed their kingdom with a firm hand, without allowing either wives or ministers to exercise any undue ascendency over them. In particular we may note that they never, so far as appears, fell under the baneful influence of eunuchs, who, from first to last, play a very subordinate part in the Parthian history. Here the contrast is striking between the Parthian and the early Persian monarchy.

The ordinary dress of the monarch was the long loose "Median robe" which had been adopted from the Medes by the Achæmenian Persians. This robe flowed down to the feet in numerous folds, enveloping and concealing almost the entire figure. Trousers and tunic were worn under it, but were hidden beneath

[1] See above, p. 218.

it, the latter of linen the former made of silk or wool.

As head dress the kings wore either the simple diadem which was a band or ribbon passed round or else set round the head and terminating in two long ends which fell down behind or else a more pretentious cap. Such in the earlier times was a sort of Scythian pointed helmet and in the later a round bonnet both sometimes adorned with pearls or gems. His hair appears to have been generally worn with two or more curls or ringlets and in front was carefully trained over the ears. The beard was almost always cultivated, and with the hair was sometimes (generally, but not always) carefully curled but sometimes they hung down in long straight locks. Mostly the beard was pointed but occasionally it was worn square. In later times a fashion grew up of puffing out the hair extravagantly on either side of the head a practice continued by the Sassanians.

When he went out to war, the monarch seems to have exchanged his "Median robe" for a short cloak reaching halfway down the thigh. His head was protected by a pointed helmet, without crest or plume, and he carried the national arm of offence the bow. Under his cloak he wore a coat of mail. He usually took the field on horseback but was occasionally mounted on an elephant or travelled to encounter the shock of battle. Gold and silver were lavishly employed in the trappings of his charger and

on his arms. For the most part he took the command, and freely exposed his person in the fight though it was regarded as no disgrace if he preferred to avoid the perils of the actual encounter. A bodyguard protected his person, surrounding him on ordinary occasions and interposing themselves between him and his assailants. He had also attendants, whose duty it was to assist him in mounting on horseback, and in dismounting, which the armour that he wore made no easy business.

It has been already observed that the queen lived, [illegible] in seclusion. When however, under peculiar circumstances she emerged from privacy her state and [illegible] were not much below those of the monarch. She wore a tiara far more elaborate than his and one which like his was encircled with the diadem. Her neck was adorned with a necklace or necklaces. In the typical instance of Musa or Thermusa, we find her [illegible] with the title of "Heavenly Goddess" (DEA COPANA). Separate apartments were [illegible] to the queen and [illegible] were [illegible] in the various palaces, which were [illegible] on a magnificent scale and decorated with the utmost richness. Diodorus, who wrote in Parthian times (B.C. 57–A.D. 21), had a good knowledge of the East thus describes the royal palace at Babylon. "The palace is roofed with brass, and a bright light flashes from it. It has chambers for the women and chambers for the men, and porticoes partly plastering with silver, partly with cloth of gold embroideries, partly with solid slabs of gold, let into the wall like pictures. The subjects of the em-

borderies are taken from the Greek mythology and include representations of Andromeda, of Amymone, and of Orpheus, who is frequently repeated. Datis is, however, represented destroying Naxos with his fleet and Artaphernes besieging Eretria, and Xerxes gaining his famous victories. You behold the occupation of Athens and the battle of Thermopylæ, and after these are more characteristic of the great Persian War, rising up and disappearing from the top of the canvas, a bridge stretched across the sea and a canal cutting Athos and the [illegible] one of these is the most beautiful and into a vault like the heaven, composed entirely of sapphires, which are the purest of stones, and resemble the sky in colour. Golden images of the gods whom they worship are set up about the vault, and shew like stars in the firmament. This is the chamber in which the king delivers his judgments. Four golden magic wheels hang from the roof, and the seat is the mountain of the Divine Nemesis. He exalts himself above the condition of man. These wheels are called the tongues of the gods, and are set in their places by the Magi who frequent the palace.[1] This description must not be taken as altogether exact. The tapestries may have represented other scenes than those which Philostratus imagined, the ceiling was certainly not composed entirely of sapphires, but either of enamelled tiles or painted wooden boards, and the "magic wheels" are questionable, but the general effect was probably very much that which the philosopher of Tyana

[1] See Lemaire, "Art Indien," p. 95.

portraits, and presented an *ensemble* that was curious, striking and magnificent.

It is probable that the state and pomp which surrounded the monarch fell little short of the Achæmenian state, and Cosroes set as it were some sort of divine during his life, and always an object of national worship after his death, the "Brother of the Sun and Moon" occupied a position far above that of the most exalted of his subjects. Tributary monarchs were shocked when in times of calamity the "Great King" stooped to succour them, and appeared before them in the guise of a suppliant shorn of his customary splendour. Nobles counted the dignity of "King's friend" and were content to submit to blows and buffets at the caprice of their royal master, before whom they prostrated themselves in humble adoration after each such castigation. The Parthian monarch dined in solitary grandeur, extended on his own special couch, and eating from his own special table, which was placed at a higher elevation than those prepared for his guests and retinue. His "friend" sat on the ground at his feet and was fed by scraps from his master's board. Guards, ministers and attendants of various kinds surrounded him, and were ready at a word or at a sign to execute his bidding. Throughout the empire he had numerous "Eyes and Ears" officers who watched his interests, and sent him timely notice of whatever touched his safety. The bed on which the monarch slept was of gold, and guests were forbidden to take their repose on couches of the same material. No stranger could

[1] Ammian. Marcellin. xxiii. 6.

obtain access to him unless introduced by the proper officer, and it was expected that whoever asked an audience should be prepared with a present of considerable value. For the gifts which he received the monarch made a suitable return, allowing such persons as he especially favoured to choose the presents that they most desired.

The Parthian nobles enjoyed a power and dignity greater than that which is usually possessed by any subjects of an Oriental king. Each of them being hereditary and not simply official, the Arsacidæ were no mere creatures of the monarch, but princes which stood on their own inherent rights. As they had the privilege of election to the throne upon a vacancy, and even at other times of deposing a duly elected monarch, the king could not but stand in wholesome awe of them, and feel himself compelled to treat them with considerable respect and deference. It is to be remembered moreover that they were not without a material force calculated to give power in support to their constitutional privileges. Each stood at the head of a body of retainers accustomed to bear arms, and to serve in the wars of the empire. Together these bodies constituted the strength of the army, since even the royal body-guard might perhaps have been capable of coping successfully with each group of retainers separately; yet such an *esprit de corps* was sure to animate the nobles generally, that in almost every case they would make common cause with any one of their number who was attacked, and would support him against the Crown with the zeal inspired by self

interest. Thus the Parthian nobility were far more powerful and independent than any similar class under the Achæmenian, Sassanian, Modern Persian or Turkish sovereignties. They exercised a real control over the monarch, and had a voice in the direction of the empire. Like the great feudal vassals of the Middle Ages they from time to time quarrelled with their liege lord, and disturbed the tranquillity of the kingdom by prolonged and dangerous civil wars; but these contentions served to keep alive a vigour and a spirit of sturdy independence very unusual in the East, and gave a stubborn strength to the Parthian Monarchy in which Oriental states and governments have for the most part been remarkably deficient.

There appear to have been several grades of rank among the Parthian nobles. The highest dignity in the kingdom next to the Crown was that of the Surena, or "Lord Marshal", and its position was hereditary in a particular family, which can have stood but a little below the royal house in wealth and consequence. The head of this noble house is said to have at one time brought into the field as many as ten thousand retainers and slaves, of whom a thousand were heavy-armed.[1] It was his right to place the diadem on the king's brow at his coronation. The other nobles lived for the most part on their domains, but took the field at the head of their retainers in case of war, and in peace might sometimes serve the offices of satrap, vizier, or royal councillor. The wealth of the class was great,[2] its

[1] Plutarch, "Crassus," § 21. [2] Justin, xli. 5.

members were supposed to be turbulent, and, like the barons of the European kingdoms, acted as a constant check and counterpoise to the royal authority which they often resisted and occasionally even overthrew.

After war, the employment in which the king and the nobles took most delight was hunting. The lion continued in the wild state an occupant of the Mesopotamian river banks and marshes, and in other parts of the empire bears, panthers, and leopards abounded. Thus the higher kinds of sport were constantly and readily obtainable. But the ordinary practice of the monarch and his courtiers seems to have fallen short of the true sportsman's ideal. Instead of seeking the more dangerous kinds of beasts in their native haunts and engaging with them under the conditions designed by Nature, the Parthians were generally content with a poorer and tamer method. They kept lions, leopards, and bears in enclosed parks, or "paradises," and found pleasure in the pursuit and slaughter of these carnivorous and half-domesticated animals. The employment may still, even under these circumstances, have contained an element of danger which rendered it exciting, but it was a poor substitute for the true sport which the "mighty hunter before the Lord" had been the first to practise in these regions (Gen. x. 9).

The ordinary dress of the Parthian noble was, like that of the monarch, a long loose robe reaching to the feet, under which he wore a vest and trousers. Bright and varied colours were commonly affected, and sometimes dresses were interwoven or em-

broidered with threads of gold. In seasons of festivity it was usual for guests to have flowers to be worn upon the head. A long knife or dagger was carried at all times, and by all classes suited for use either as an instrument or as a weapon.

In the earlier and simpler period of the empire — when the nation was just emerging from barbarism — the Parthians are noted as a sparing people, but as time went on they became more civilized, and became an indolent race to cater and a hard drinker. Wine formed a main part of their diet, but he relished also pork and probably in other ways [illegible] food. He ate leavened bread with his meat and various kinds of vegetables. The best wheat was produced by right and proper sowing. It would seem that the Romans were known as *panes nigri* or *panis Parthicus*. Dates were also cultivated largely by the Parthians, and the fruit grew in some parts of the country to an extraordinary size. A sauce of wine was made from it, and this seems to have been the [illegible] drink while the nation generally indulged in [illegible]. The purple made from the dates of Babylon was the most highly esteemed, and was reserved for the use of the king and the higher order of satraps. The ordinary cloth was dyed with shades of an inferior quality. Of the Parthian entertainments music was commonly an accompaniment. The date, the pipe, the drum, are the instruments called the *rudder*, appear to have been known to them, and they understood how to combine these instruments in concerted harmony. They are said

to have concluded all their feasts with dancing, an amusement of which they were passionately fond; but this was probably the case only with the lower orders of the people. Dancing, at the least, unless associated with religion, is viewed as degrading, and is not indulged in by those who wish to be considered respectable.

The Parthians were jealous of their women, and the separation of the sexes was very decided among them. The women took their meals and passed the greater portion of their lives apart from the men. Veils were commonly worn, as in modern Mohammedan countries, and it was regarded as essential to female delicacy that women, whether married or single, should converse freely with no males who were not either their near relations or else eunuchs. Adultery was punished with extreme severity; but divorce was obtained without much difficulty, and women of rank released themselves from the dispute by right grounds of complaint, and with little loss of reputation. Polygamy was the established rule, and every Parthian was entitled, besides his chief wife to maintain as many concubines as he pleased. Some of the nobles supported an excessive number, but the expenses of the seraglio prevented the generality from taking very much advantage of the indulgence which the law permitted. It is probable that the bulk of the population, as is the case now in Mohammedan countries, was monogamous.

As to the degree of refinement and civilisation whereto the Parthians attained, it is difficult to judge

and determine with accuracy. In minute art their remains, as we have already seen, do not show much taste or sense of beauty. There is perhaps sufficient ground to believe that their architecture possessed a certain amount of merit, but the existing monuments can scarcely be taken as representative of pure Parthian work, since they may have owed their excellence—in some measure—to Greek artists, or at any rate to foreign influence. Still the following particulars, for which there is good evidence, seem to imply that the nation had risen in reality far above that "barbarism" which it was the fashion for the Greek and Roman writers to impute to it. In the first place, the Parthian kings had a considerable knowledge of foreign languages. Thucydides tells us[1] that Orodes the grandparent of Cyrsus was so far conversant with the Greek language and literature that he could enjoy the representation of a play of Euripides. The general presence of some knowledge of Greek, at any rate by the upper classes, seems to be proved by the use of the Greek letters and language on the coins and on inscriptions. Other languages were also to some extent studied and understood. Latin was almost universally placed as Semitic legend upon their coins, and there is at least one instance of a Parthian prince adopting an Aramaic legend of the type known as Barthian.[2] Josephus moreover, tells us the Parthians was familiar with Hebrew as well as Greek, since he wrote his history of the Jewish War in his own native tongue,

[1] Plutarch, "Vit. Crass." § 32.

[2] "Numismatic Chronicle," New Ser. p. 104.

before he put out his Greek version for the benefit especially of the Parthians, among whom he declares that he had a large number of readers.

It does not appear that the Parthians had any native literature, writing however was familiar to them and was widely employed by them in matters of business. Not only were negotiations carried on with foreign powers by means of written despatches, but the affairs of the empire generally were transacted by means of writing. A customs-house system was, we are told, established among the frontiers, and all commodities brought to any part of the country were registered in a book at the time of entry by the custom-house officer. In the great cities where the Court passed a portion of the year, account was kept of the arrival of strangers, whose names and descriptions were placed upon record by the keepers of the gates. The orders of the Crown were signified in writing to the satraps, and they doubtless corresponded with the Court in the same way. In the earlier times the writing material commonly used was linen, but, shortly before the time of Pliny the Parthians began to make paper from papyrus which grew in the neighborhood of Babylon, though they still continued also to employ, and gave the preference to, the material to which use had accustomed them.

The Parthians had many usages which seem to imply a fairly advanced civilization. There was a considerable trade between Rome and Parthia, carried on by means of travelling merchants. Parthia imported from Rome various metals, and a multitude of

[illegible] Parthia.

manufactured articles of a high class. Her principal exports were textile fabrics and spices. The textile fabrics seem to have been produced chiefly in Babylonia, and to have consisted principally of silks, carpets, and coverlets. The silks were largely used by the Roman fashionable ladies. The coverlets, which were patterned with a variety of colours, formed articles of great price, and were regarded as fit ornaments of the Imperial palace. Among the spices exported, the most esteemed were bdellium, and the *nard* or *calamus*, or sweet-scented bulrush. Advanced ideas are also supposed to be the Parthians' freedom of conscience in religion, which has been already mentioned.[1] Even in political matters they appear to have been free from the narrowness which generally characterises barbarous nations. They behaved mercifully to prisoners, admitted foreigners freely to offices of high trust, gave an asylum to refugees, and treated them with respect and kindness. Were strict observers of their ordeal word and oath, faithful to their treaty obligations. On the other hand, it must be admitted that they had some customs which imply that they retained a tinge of barbarism. They used torture for the extraction of replies from accused persons, employed the scourge to punish trifling offences, and in certain cases consecrated to Mithra and Anaitis the bodies of their dead enemies. Their addiction to incest and polygamy is also a barbarous trait. They were, on the whole, considerably less vain than the contemporary Greeks and Romans, but the difference does not appear to have been so

[1] Supra, p. 360.

great as the classical writers would have us imagine it.

We cannot, however, deny, and we do not wish to conceal the fact, that the Parthians exhibited especially during the later period of the empire, a strong tendency to degenerate. They lost their primitive virtues of simplicity and abstemiousness. They became luxurious, and to a certain extent effeminate. The dash of *élan*, which characterised their warfare in the earlier times is conspicuous by its absence in the campaigns of the later monarchs. A decline in art and letters is also observable in the Parthian remains that have come down to us; especially in the coins which, after the reign of Orodes, proceed from bad to worse, and end with presenting to us effigies that have neither force nor character, and legends that are absolutely illegible. A knowledge of Greek is still possessed, the Greek letters being employed, and the words, when they can be deciphered, being clearly intended to be Greek. But they are often misspelt, the forms used are ungrammatical, while, at the last, the letters mere straggle over the field of the coin, and are not really formed into words. Further the anomaly is introduced of a second legend, which is Semitic both in language and character, and reads from right to left.

Still, to judge fairly of the Parthians, we must view them, not in their decline, but rather in the earlier stages of their career, before decline had set in. Speaking broadly, the position which they occupied among the nations of the old world was not very dissimilar to that which is held by the Turks in the

system of Modern Europe. They possessed a military strength which caused them to be both respected and feared, while they were further noted for a vigour of administration rarely seen among Orientals. It is true that a certain coarseness and rudeness attached to them which they found it impossible to shake off, and this gave their enemies a plausible ground for representing them as absolute barbarians. But we must not be led away by the exaggerations of prejudiced writers who sought to elevate the fame and reputation of their own countrymen by blackening the character of their rivals. Except in respect of their military prowess it is doubtful if justice is done to the Parthians by any classical author. They occupied the position in the world between about B.C. 250 to A.D. 226. They were a check and a counterpoise to the preserving a balance of power, and prevented the absorption of all other nations into the Tyrant Empire. They afforded a refuge to those whom Rome would fain have united to herself, and a freedom to their own subjects which the Roman Emperors never permitted except the Romans to tolerate in a blind fear of the foreigners and gave the best argument that their foes and a government well suited to its needs, for a period of nearly four centuries.

THE END.

APPENDIX

(See p. 132.)

THE king alluded to has been called Mnaseas or Mnaseus, and was formerly admitted into the list of Parthian monarchs by the author, who followed Lindsay and others. But Professor Gardner has shown that the name which seems to read thus on the coin should probably be read as Kamnaskires and not Mnaseas, καὶ Μνασκίρης ὁ being a manifest corruption from Καμναστρης ὁς, and that the king in question is probably a tributary monarch of the Parthian series, well known by unmistakable coins, which bear the legend of ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΚΑΜΝΑΣΚΙΡΟΥ.

COIN OF KAMNASKIRES.

The probable date of the monarch is about that of Mithridates I. of Parthia. (See Professor Gardner's "Parthian Coinage," pp. 8 and 11.)

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